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A Provocative Conspiracy

Had this article presented a scintilla of evidence to support any allegations made by its writers, one might be more prone to consider the arguments. But hyperbole and soap-box soliloquy don't stand for much when a decision is to be made based on fact.

Florida, a state where widespread voter fraud was proven in a 1997 Miami mayoral primary (assisted [by Florida legislature passing a state law, in 1998] corrective procedures to verify that votes are cast legally, and the votes being cast are not those of persons deceased, those with felony convictions, and those adjudicated mentally incompetent. The current process seeking federal database records to assure votes are cast by US citizens is an extension of that validation process.

Why any thinking citizen should abdicate the choosing of elected leaders (at any level of government) to a process subject to fraud is beyond the scope of this politically based article. In the Miami election, the trial judge, Thomas S. Wilson Jr., concluded that "the evidence showed a pattern of fraudulent intentional and criminal conduct that resulted in such an extensive abuse of the absentee ballot laws that it can fairly be said that the intent of these laws was totally frustrated ... This scheme is defined, literally and figuratively, stole the ballot from the hands of every honest voter in the city of Miami." Yet the authors have the audacity to claim that preventing such fraud is worse than the fraud itself?

William Thompson, Walnut Creek

Gun Control and Tunnel Vision

It seems the *Express* favors writers whose dislike of firearms is so great that they cannot write an article about anything within it dragging in the totally irrelevant top of gun control. The latest example is the otherwise excellent article by Billy Manes and Erin Sulf "ran on the purge of Florida voters rolls by Governor Rich Scott on the pretext that the rolls are full of illegal aliens.

The most amusing thing about this for me as a pro-gun progressive (there are a lot more of us than you think) is that the solution Manes and Sullivan advocate for addressing voter fraud without attaching large numbers of minority voters severe prosecution of the rare cases of voter fraud is the same solution advocates of civil rights for gun owners want used to prevent gun violence. They want current laws used for serious prosecution of those who commit gun violence not scrutiny of attacks like the form of gun bans on the rights of the 99 percent of gun owners who obey the laws.

As for gun owners attacks on Attorney General Holder, they are justified. He, either connected or signed off on a plan to allow US-made firearms to be transferred to Mexican drug lords so that when they inevitably showed up in traces of firearms at Mexican crime scenes, he could use this as evidence of the need to reinstate the Clinton-era ban on so-called assault weapons, firearms that were never popular with American criminals. What he failed to consider was that people would be murdered with these firearms and one of those murdered would be a US Border Patrol agent who was shot by a drug smuggle using a gun he Holder allowed to leave the US.

Holder would have gotten away with this deception if it was not for several honest honest American gun dealers who reported suspicious buyers to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives, and US attorneys from Arizona who were whistleblowers after they asked to prosecute the suspicious buyers and were ordered by superiors in the Attorney General's office, to let the traffickers escape. No wonder he refuses to turn over documents to investigations by Senate and House committees. These show criminal offenses on Holder's part. In the Fast and Furious scandal for which he should be arrested and tried.

Eric Thompson, Berkeley

Oakland Police Commission Expert Analysis Lives

It's a Start, Not a Solution

This article, as well as the initiative promoted by Rashidah Grinage and others ignores a critical aspect of the work of a police commission as other public-safety oversight office for Oakland. That is, the improvement of public safety in Oakland which is afflicted with outsize crime problems, including one of the highest murder rates in the nation.

It is amazing to me that the writer, Grinage, and others seem to be able to overlook what Oaklanders experience every day and what is ending the heart out of minority and economically disadvantaged communities in this city. What about the black families whose children cannot succeed in school because they are traumatized when a parent or a sibling is shot? What about the hopeless job situation for so many young men in Oakland because small businesses cannot succeed in a high-crime environment? These are all consequences of failures not only of police but of a host of public safety-related aspects of Oakland governance. As David Sidansky at UC Berkeley pointed out a police commission, to be successful, needs to

be part of a series of coordinated efforts. One of the most significant functions of a commission is the actual management and coordination of all related public-safety work, including policing, social programs, probation, and other justice-system relationships. Again the writer and Grunage et al seem to be blindfolded.

Oakland has many problems with policing and police policy, well beyond discipline of officers who misbehave. Crime is out of control, police reform toward more community policing needs to be instituted the number of sworn officers is half of what it should be; and violence-reduction programs fail because no agency is coordinating them. A police commission is a means to deal with these problems. The function of a police commission is far more than simply to discipline officers who misbehave. A commission also promotes the legitimate functions of police, ensures high morale among officers, and ensures that police have the resources to be effective in protecting public safety.

Oakland's citizens need not only ethical policing but also effective policing, well-coordinated with other public safety efforts. A police commission in Oakland could be a step away from the current situation in which police are tripping over their own feet while shootings continue every day of the year.

Mike Ferns, Oakland

Good Riddance

I am glad the recall campaign is over. It has been divisive and takes attention away from real solutions that move Oakland forward.

It's interesting to note that the most silent councilwoman, Kaplan, is also the most favored one. As brainy President Woodrow Wilson once said: "If you want to make enemies try changing something." Change is what Mayor Quan is doing. Some police members probably dislike the pension contribution and the greater accountability that they now face.

Angie Tam, Oakland

Pathogens Are the Problem

While cannabinoid levels are interesting, and even vitally important in rare cases (such as Jayden's) the true danger in untreated cannabis comes from the potential pathogens — pseudomonas, aspergillus, and E. coli are routinely found by our laboratory (CW Analytical). While these microorganisms present little danger to healthy individuals they can be deadly to someone with a compromised immune system. Thank you David for highlighting the effect on patient's health and safety that this cracked down has caused.

David Egurtza, San Leandro

Corrections

In our July 11 music story "Tolerance and Zero Progress" we incorrectly stated that Matt Sakrezone booked Zero Progress' American Tour. It was in fact booked by his brother Ed.

Our July 11 music pick "Punk Funk Mob" contained a number of errors. It misspelled Fiona Andrades surname; stated that Andrades is a Berkeley native when she's from Oakland, and misstated that the band's drummer is named Mike Logan (it's Mike Williams).

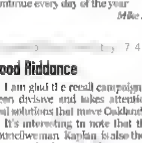
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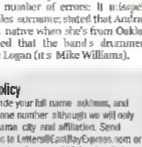
THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

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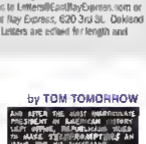












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SEVEN DAYS

WHERE'S KAMALA?

California's attorney general has remained conspicuously silent as the feds target medical cannabis businesses that abide by state and local laws.

By Robert Gammon

When **Kamala Harris** ran for state attorney general in 2010, she portrayed herself as a staunch advocate for medical cannabis. Medical marijuana groups, in turn, strongly supported her campaign. In fact, Harris partially owes her narrow victory over Los Angeles District Attorney **Steve Cooley**, a medical pot skeptic, to her stance on medical cannabis and the backing she received because of it. After all, she only defeated Cooley by about 75,000 votes, or just 0.8 percent of the ballots cast. And yet, despite her campaign pledges and the debt she owes the medical cannabis community, Harris has been conspicuously silent during the nine-month-long federal crackdown on medical marijuana.

Harris' silence might be understandable if the federal crackdown was targeting drug gangs and other criminal enterprises, but it's not. Instead, the four US attorneys in California have focused on medical cannabis businesses — such as Oaksterdam University and Harborside Health Center, both in Oakland — that have steadfastly obeyed state and local laws. Indeed, no evidence has yet surfaced that the medical cannabis businesses targeted by the feds have done anything other than violate the federal ban on marijuana.

US Attorney **Melinda Haag** of Northern California admitted as much last week after she launched her attempt to close Harborside. Haag is trying to seize the dispensary's building in an asset forfeiture proceeding, and in a short statement explaining her actions, she indicated that she does not know whether Harborside has broken any state or city laws. Instead, she said she was going after Harborside because she thinks it must be doing something wrong because it's so large. "The larger the operations, the greater the likelihood that there will be abuse of the state's medical marijuana laws," she stated.

Before last week, Haag had maintained that she was only going after medical cannabis businesses that were within 1,000 feet of a school, playground, or park — the implication being that she was trying to shield kids from pot. But her assault on Harborside, which is nowhere near a school, playground, or park, shows that she also is now cracking down on legit law-abiding operations.

The US attorney's actions drew an immediate and public rebuke from one of Oakland's top law enforcement officials — City Attorney **Barbara Parker**, who also happens to be a former federal prosecutor. "As Oakland's City Attorney and a former Assistant US Attorney, I strongly oppose federal actions against members of Oakland's business community who are complying with California and Oakland laws and regulations and paying their fair share of taxes," Parker said in a statement. Parker also appeared at a press conference in support of Harborside.

Other political leaders have also criticized Haag, including Congresswoman **Barbara Lee** and **Betty Yee** of the state Board of Equalization. But Harris has refused to say anything, even though as California's top law enforcement officer, it's her responsibility to uphold and enforce state laws — not Haag's.

As such, there's an argument to be made that Harris has allowed Haag and the other three US attorneys in California to usurp her authority — they have become California's de facto attorneys general. Haag, in fact, is proving that she believes they have the right to trample on or enforce California and local laws that permit the sale of medical cannabis whenever they want to. And Harris is letting them do it.

But she doesn't have to. She has power if she wants to wield it. As a rising star in the Democratic Party, she is viewed favorably by the Obama administration. So if she were to strongly condemn the federal attack on state-law abiding businesses, it could carry weight within the US Justice Department. However, her silence is likely having the opposite effect — it's almost assuredly being viewed by federal law enforcement as acquiescence.

Quan's Slipups



Oakland Mayor **Jean Quan** has received a considerable amount of bad press since taking office, and a substantial part of it has been self inflicted. The most recent example, according to a recent *San Francisco Chronicle* story, is the revelation that Quan made an inaccurate statement to the Alameda County Civil Grand Jury concerning Oakland's badly backlogged police crime lab. Quan told grand jurors that the FBI was helping clear the backlog when it was not. And her incorrect statement reflects what has become a troublesome pattern for the mayor — asserting something publicly when she clearly doesn't know for sure whether what she is saying is true.

Quan may have gotten away with such conduct as a member of the city council and the school board, but as mayor of a high profile city, her words and actions are under much greater scrutiny. As such, the mayor needs to be much more careful with what she says. She cannot afford to inflict damage on herself — and, by extension, her office and the city — by making statements that can easily be proven incorrect.

Many politicians are afraid of looking ignorant, but leaders should be even more wary of saying something that isn't true. For Quan, that means double- or triple-checking the accuracy of statements told to her before repeating them. Another recent example was the mini-scandal over her repeated misstatements about how much violent crime occurs within the one hundred blocks the city has been focusing on. The mayor said she was given bad information, but also said she's responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the statements she makes.

She's right about that. She also should not be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I'll let you know when I know for sure."

Although some will probably criticize her for not knowing the answer to particular questions, voters are smart. Not many of them are going to expect a mayor of a city with as many problems as Oakland has to know the inner workings of the police department's crime lab. They will care, however, if their mayor claims to know something when she doesn't.

By itself, the crime-lab misstatement is not that consequential. It doesn't matter whether Quan knows what's happening in the lab. She's better off delegating those kinds of issues — in this case, to Police Chief **Howard Jordan** and his direct supervisor, City Administrator **Deanna Santana**. But by making another inaccurate statement, Quan changed the news cycle from being a question about what to do about the crime lab's problems to being about her again saying something that isn't true.

There is little doubt that Quan is a hard-working mayor and that she deeply cares about Oakland. She's also made some smart moves since taking over for **Ron Dellums**. But if she continues to make inaccurate statements, it will come to define her tenure as mayor, and she almost assuredly will only serve one term in office. ●

Seven Days is culled from our news blog, 92510.

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Stephen DeAngelo, owner of Harborside Health Center, vowed to fight the federal crackdown. David Downs

LEGALIZATION NATION

HARBORSIDE FACES RAIDS, EPIC LEGAL BATTLE

An asset forfeiture expert says it's no slam dunk as to whether the feds can close the Oakland dispensary

By David Downs

Harborside Health Center's 100,000 patients and their allies are bracing themselves for a possible federal raid on the popular Oakland medical cannabis dispensary as well as a long, complex, and costly legal battle. A pre-dawn raid on Harborside's to seize its marijuana, computers, and other equipment could be imminent, experts say, after US Attorney Melinda Haag filed a federal civil forfeiture complaint last week against Harborside's landlord Ana Chretien. Such civil forfeiture actions can be a prelude to civil suits and criminal charges against dispensary operators.

Though dispensaries and landlords have often lost such battles, Harborside is not a typical dispensary said Mill Valley attorney Brenda Grantland, co-founder of the Forfeiture Endangers American Rights foundation and a 29-year veteran of asset forfeiture cases. Grantland currently represents two landlords in medical marijuana cases. "I don't think they're screwed," she said of Harborside and Chretien. "They're going to have a big battle ahead of them. The only way they're screwed is if they don't mount a good defense."

On July 10, dispensary staffers found letters from the federal government announcing the planned forfeiture taped to the doors of Harborside's properties in Oakland and San Jose. Club officials then held a defiant press conference Thursday morning at Oakland City Hall. "Harborside has nothing to hide," said owner Stephen DeAngelo. "We have no intention of closing. We will contest the Justice Department openly in public and through all means at our disposal. We look forward to our day in court. We will never abandon our patients."

But many questions were left unanswered at the press conference, foremost of which is the terms of Harborside's lease. Landlords have been known to evict dispensaries when their property is threatened with federal seizure, Grantland said. Berkeley Patients Group's landlord evicted that dispensary earlier this year after being threatened with forfeiture. Scores of other clubs have succumbed to the same fate. "Most of them would [evict]," she said of landlords. "Most leases have some kind of clause that says if you violate the law and cause the property ownership to be jeopardized, that can cancel the lease for that reason. If the lease has that, [DeAngelo] won't have any say over it."

At the press conference DeAngelo said that Harborside Oakland has a five-year lease with two optional one-year extensions. Chretien — sole owner of the property — was not at the press conference. Her attorney told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that Harborside is "in compliance with state and local regulations to operate their kind of business ... We would have no reason to believe there was anything improper."

Chretien's claims could play a pivotal role in a civil forfeiture trial. Haag is seeking the property under federal laws that allow the government to seize land used for drug sales.

Grantland said Chretien whose company ABC Security operates on the same Oakland parcel with Harborside, has thirty days to file a "claim" affirming ownership of the property. She then has another twenty days to file an "answer" where she should ask for a jury trial, and raise any possible defenses. Grantland said landlords can assert a number of defenses. They can claim, for example that they didn't know illegal drug activity was taking place at the property. They also can claim a proportional defense, asking the government to not take all of the property.

The case would then be assigned a judge, and if Chretien's answer survives a potential prosecutorial "motion for summary judgment" — wherein the judge decides whether she has a plausible defense — it could go to a jury trial. Judges in the Northern District of California are a mixed bag, Grantland said. "There are some liberal judges, but there are some very pro-prosecution judges there. You never know who you're going to get."

Most forfeiture cases don't get to a jury trial, but a Northern California jury might be "pretty good" for Chretien and Harborside, she said. Northern California residents after all overwhelmingly support the lawful use of medical marijuana.

As such, Chretien may be able to claim that she indeed believed what Harborside was doing was legal. Even though Harborside advertised that it sold medical marijuana — which is illegal under federal law — other factors are at play. The dispensary for example had a lawful city permit and a state business license in a state that has decriminalized the drug. Moreover, President Obama said he would not waste scarce federal resources on medical marijuana users in states where it was legal while US Attorney General Eric Holder has said federal prosecutors are only interested in operators "violating both state and federal law. And finally Haag has said she was focusing her crackdown efforts on medical pot businesses within 1,000 feet of a school or park. Harborside is not close to a school or park.

As a result, Chretien could contend that she believed Harborside was engaging in legal activity. "That's a reason to not be culpable," Grantland said. "You had reasonable belief that what you were doing was legal."

A civil forfeiture case can last two years or longer, and become very expensive. Moreover federal prosecutors often delay the civil case while pursuing criminal charges. As a result, it's reasonable to lose a police raid on Harborside, Grantland said. In the scrapes, usually conducted during pre-dawn hours, federal agents snatch up their cash computers and other equipment, and might arrest Harborside's staff and owners. Or they may not arrest anyone. "It's totally arbitrary," Grantland said.

In the past, many dispensaries have reopened within days of a raid only to get raided again and again. However, criminal investigations can also open up new avenues for counter-attack. "From the beginning you would think that it looks desperate but you got to see what kind of cards [prosecutors] are holding," she said. The federal government, for example, can slip up and accidentally subpoena some one's medical records in the search warrant affidavit or by the improper use of confidential informants. The collapse of a criminal case, in turn, can then take a civil forfeiture complaint down with it. "A lot of times the motivation for making an example of someone causes [prosecutors] to lose good judgment," Grantland said. "They just get reckless and do something that is ridiculous or rash, or they lie and then the lie comes back to haunt them."

Harborside officials have also made it clear that they're going to wage a zealous fight in the court of public opinion. It's unclear what effect that would have but a popular dispensary appears to have won the preliminary round. Haag and the federal government have already been strongly criticized by state Board of Equalization member Betty Yee, Congresswoman Barbara Lee of Oakland and Oakland City Attorney Barbara Parker who is a former federal prosecutor.

Most major news agencies ran such criticism alongside tearful testimonials from medical marijuana patients and their families. By comparison, Haag's terse statement made her effort look arbitrary and capricious, and indicated that she had no proof Harborside has violated state law. ●

David.Downs@gmail.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name





FEINSTEIN'S SCIENTIST REBUKED

The head of a respected panel shreds the credibility of an ex-Cal professor who has helped the senator

By Robert Gammon

In her attempts to block the creation of the first marine wilderness on the West Coast (see "Feinstein's Folly," 6/13), US Senator Dianne Feinstein has relied heavily on the work of Corey Goodman, a former neuroscience professor at UC Berkeley. Over the last several years, Goodman has repeatedly criticized scientific studies conducted by the National Park Service at Point Reyes National Seashore. And Feinstein has pointed to Goodman's critiques as proof for why a large oyster farm should receive a ten-year lease extension at the national park — a move that would delay the creation of the marine wilderness at Drakes Estero. However, a newly released document reveals that the head of a highly respected, independent panel that has studied the oyster farm's effects on the estero says Goodman's critiques are riddled with errors.

In a scathingly detailed memo, Tim Ragen, executive director of the US Marine Mammal Commission, stated that Goodman's work is "troubling," "wrong," "inaccurate," and "unreliable" and contains "fundamental flaws" that render it "incorrect on multiple grounds." The letter was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request.

The hard-hitting rebuke may also prove to be a devastating blow to Goodman's credibility concerning the oyster farm and the marine wilderness. In 1976, Congress designated Drakes Estero to become a federally protected marine wilderness, but that can't happen as long as Drakes Bay Oyster Company continues to operate in the middle of it. The oyster company's lease with the National Park Service is set to expire this November.

During the past half-decade the park service has contended that the oyster farm, operated by politically connected rancher Kevin Lunny, has been harming harbor seals. Drakes Estero as a major pupping ground for the seals. But Goodman has repeatedly contended that the park service is wrong. Goodman, who does not have a background in environmental science, had produced statistical models that he contends prove that the oyster farm's boats have not harmed the seals.

But in his memo, Ragen stated that Goodman's statistical analysis is full of holes. "To be clear: such errors are not trivial in any regard," Ragen wrote in his memo last month to Goodman. "They are fundamental flaws in your application of the multiple regression model and they invalidate your results."

Last November, the Marine Mammal Commission issued a report that concluded that there was some evidence that the oyster farm has been impacting the seals. In his memo, Ragen stood by that assessment, stating that "from time to time," the oyster farm's "activities have resulted in disturbance of the seals in the estuary."

Feinstein's press office did not return a phone call seeking comment, as it's unclear whether the senator plans to continue to rely on Goodman's arguments to bolster her case as to why the oyster farm's lease should be extended. However, there is no doubt that she has depended extensively on Goodman in the past few years.

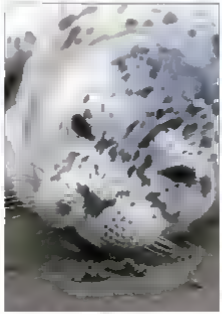
For example, last year she attached a rider in the Marine Mammal Commission's budget bill specifically requesting that the commission investigate the very same arguments that Goodman had been making about the oyster farm's effect on harbor seals. She also sent a letter to the park service in 2011 parroting complaints that Goodman had made about its draft environmental report on Drakes Estero. That draft report stated that allowing the oyster farm a lease to expire is the "preferred alternative." Feinstein also sent a letter earlier this year to US Interior Secretary Ken Salazar alleging that the park service had "fabricated science" and pointed to arguments made by Goodman as proof.

Although Ragen's memo likely will damage Goodman's reputation in the scientific community, Goodman still holds significant sway in the Point Reyes area. He's a rancher there and he co-founded the Marin Media Institute, an entity that owns the *Point Reyes Light* newspaper. He also regularly writes columns for the *Light* criticizing the park service.

But now that the executive director of a respected panel has rebuked Goodman's scientific work, it's hard to see how Feinstein can continue to rely on him. "Having this letter coming from an independent commission it destroys the credibility that one has," said Neal Desai, associate director of the National Parks Conservation Association.

Salazar is expected to make his decision on whether to extend the oyster farm's lease — and thus delay creation of the marine wilderness — later this year. ●

Robert Gammon@EastBayExpress.com



Harbor seals are being impacted by the oyster farm

HOME GROWN AUTHOR NIGHT



Co-Director of the RAND Drug Policy Research Center **Beau Kilmer** author of 2012 release *Marijuana Legalization. What Everyone Needs To Know*



Celebrity grower **Ed Rosenthal** author of numerous 2012 books including *Marijuana Grower's Handbook*



University of Cincinnati Assistant Professor of History **Isaac Campos**, author of 2012 release *HOME GROWN Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs*



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EAST BAY EXPRESS

OAKLAND SWAPS SUBSIDIZED CORPORATIONS

Contrary to what officials claim Oakland's toxic deals with Goldman Sachs helped pay for the Raiders return and the Forest City Uptown project.

By Darwin BondGraham

In public forums during the past several months city officials have repeatedly said that Oakland signed a 1997 rate-swap agreement with Goldman Sachs in order to avoid the costs of rising interest rates. The swap as previously reported turned out to be a loser deal that's now costing the city $4 million a year. And city records and press reports show that the 1997 swap and one from 2003 didn't just benefit Goldman Sachs at the expense of Oakland taxpayers, they also subsidized private corporations that did business with the city.

In 1997 Oakland's Finance and Management Agency staff working with employees at Goldman Sachs designed the interest rate swap in order to free up $15 million to pay off a portion of the mounting debt associated with relocating the Raiders football team from Los Angeles. And in 2003, the city council agreed to restructure the interest rate swap in order to obtain a $5.97 million "loan" from Goldman Sachs. Much of this money was used to subsidize Forest City Residential West, the politically connected corporation that built the Uptown Apartments.

These reasons for agreeing to the interest rate swap, and for later changing its terms, not only contradict recent claims made by Oakland's Finance and Management Agency staff about the swap's origins and purpose, it also flies in the face of the city's current swap policy. While Oakland had no official swap policy in 1997 and 2003, the city's policy from 2005 demands "prudent risk guidelines." When the city modifies bonds with interest rate swaps the policy states that it is "to produce debt service savings, [and/or] limit or hedge overall interest rate exposure." Nowhere does it say that Oakland may use swaps to finance other debts or subsidize private companies. In their reports to the council this year about the swap Finance and Management Agency staff members have never explained the swap's original purpose, nor the rumors it was restructured in 2003.



The Uptown Apartments. Michael P. Beck Til cir cc

According to press reports from 1997 the council agreed to the interest rate swap with Goldman Sachs to help finance the Raiders' return. To lure the Raiders back in 1995, the city issued roughly $200 million in bonds to refurbish the Coliseum. Some of these proceeds also went to fund a new training facility for the team, and $83.9 million went straight to the team as a "loan" — which the Raiders never repaid.

The scheme to repay the bonds involving the sale of personal seat licenses for Raiders games, also didn't pan out. And the fine print on the Coliseum bonds called for the city and Alameda County to make up for the shortfall with payments from their general funds. Faced with millions in yearly debt it owed on the bonds, the city agreed to the interest rate swap with Goldman Sachs. In part because it produced a $15 million immediate payout that would be available in 1998 to pay the Coliseum debt which includes the Raiders' "loan."

Finding this money was a tricky endeavor requiring the city to refinance a different set of bonds using the risky swap and then transfer the proceeds over. A report from the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1997 indicates that Oakland's leaders therefore chose a Goldman Sachs proposal to refund the city's enormous pension obligation bonds. According to the *Chronicle*, "Although the county and city are stuck with big bills for the Coliseum this year the money won't be coming from their general funds. It will come from money they made in refinancing pension bonds last year." The *Chronicle* went on to quote Councilman Ignasio De La Fuente who explained that payments on the Coliseum bonds weren't the worry of Oakland taxpayers "it's going to have nothing to do with our normal budget," De La Fuente said at the time.

A 1997 article in *Bloomberg*, a trade publication focusing on business and finance, called it creative thinking. "The Oakland-Alameda POB was hatched after the city and county lured the Raiders back north from Los Angeles with a package that included a renovated stadium. When more than $30 million in cost overruns emerged from the refurbishing project, Alameda and Oakland had to come up with the money. Neither wanted to ask taxpayers to approve a bond issue. So both decided to use savings from refinancing their pension obligations to cover any extra costs."

Current councilmembers who were there to approve the deal with De La Fuente include Jane Brunner, Nancy Nadel and Larry Reid. They didn't respond to requests for comment for this article, and documents dating back to 1997 are unavailable on the city's legislative database.

Six years later, Oakland's redevelopment authority was strapped for cash as it tried to patch together financing for the Uptown development, the jewel in Mayor Jerry Brown's 10k plan. Under the terms of Oakland's agreement with the developer the city was responsible for purchasing the land and paying for infrastructure improvements in the Uptown project's footprint. In order to raise several million dollars for this, Oakland agreed to a modification of the 1997 interest rate swap changing the benchmark rate used to calculate Goldman Sachs' obligation from the BMA Municipal Bond Index to 65 percent of the London Interbank Offered Rate, also known as LIBOR.

The council resolution approving the restructuring of the swap acknowledged that the new terms were richer for Oakland. "As a result of this change in index the City will receive a payment from Goldman of an amount not less than $5,000 000 reflecting the change in market value for such revisions to the Swap," read the resolution. It continued, "the City finds that the money received from Goldman will partially compensate the City for assuming a possibly greater basis risk. The Resolution practically earmarked the money. "The payments received by the City from Goldman can be used to finance capital redevelopment economic development projects."

"The Council may not have gotten complete information about what they were voting on," said former Councilman Wilson Riles Jr. about the 2003 swap restructuring. "Mayor Brown wanted the Uptown project had as part of his 10k plan but the city did not have the money subsidy that the developer wanted." Riles suspects that Mayor Brown and his staff crafted the swap revision and passed it by the council with a flood of other legislation.

The amended Exclusive Negotiating Agreement between Oakland and Forest City called for "utilization of the 'bond swap' proceeds, as authorized by the City Council on February 25 2003." A table accompanying the staff report on the agreement showed the city using $5.9 million in "Bond Swap Proceeds" to finance the Forest City Uptown project through the redevelopment agency.

Deborah Berman Santana of the Coalition to Stop Goldman Sachs said the news that the city used the swap to subsidize the Raiders and Forest City doesn't invalidate the demand that Goldman Sachs terminate the deal at no cost to the city. Rather, she said, it may puts Brown and members of the council in the spotlight along with Goldman Sachs. ●

Editor@EastBayExpress.com



ARTS & CULTURE

REVOLUTION



Best artist: John Casey

Chris Duffey

BEST ARTIST

John Casey

Sunnywax.com

It takes a lot to be a successful artist. It's not just about making great visionary art; it takes persistent, even relentless, community involvement. John Casey whose uniquely beautiful and often grotesque illustrated figures have been ubiquitous in the Oakland art scene for the past decade, is one such community leader. Having helped form the original group of galleries that became Art Murmur, Casey has consistently displayed a selfless attitude while promoting art in Oakland, including documenting others' shows on his website, leading tours through galleries on Saturday Strolls and serving on Art Murmur's board of directors. He organized the Flourish event earlier this year at Mina, at which twenty artists produced their work live and sold it on the spot, raising thousands of dollars. Casey's personal art career is on a seemingly unstoppable upward trend. He had his first solo show in Paris last fall and will be having another at Four Colors Gallery in Oakland this October.

BEST GALLERY

Vessel Gallery

471 25th St., Oakland, 510-893-8805, Vessel-Gallery.com

Being a participating gallery in Oakland Art Murmur requires presenting a new show every four weeks — clearly a herculean task. Some galleries get around this by opting for a less-grueling five- or eight-week schedule, or by showing one artist over and over again. But not Vessel Gallery. Owner and curator Lonnie Lee never misses a beat. Somehow, she manages to put together brilliant and monumental group shows every month. They always push the envelope in terms of vision, execution, scope and presentation. Who could forget Cyrus Tilton's Cycle, an elaborate installation in which thousands of sculpted insects moved across the gallery in a wonder of movement and light? The art scene on 25th Street has hugely benefitted by Vessel Gallery's presence — there were only three galleries on 25th Street when Vessel opened in 2010; now there are more than a dozen. With its mix of media (sculpture, jewelry, painting, etc.) Lee's gallery demonstrates what Oakland art is, and exemplifies what it can be.

BEST ART WALK THAT'S NOT ART MURMUR

Piedmont Avenue Art Walk

Every third Thursday, PiedmontAvenue.org

Never mind that there's only one official gallery — CK Gallery — on the whole street: Piedmont Avenue has been quietly brewing a great art scene for the past year. Its monthly Art Walk on every third Thursday features more than two dozen venues where local artists and craftspeople show their work. The offbeat locations include a video store (Video Room); a book shop (Owl & Company Bookshop), a gym (Flex Circuit Gym) and even a dry-cleaning shop (Piedmont Avenue Cleaners) using art as an excuse to have a block party, a way to get out, explore, and meet the neighbors. Erica Skone-Rees, who owns the boutique The Rare Bird and who organized the event, has galvanized the local community to present a low-key alternative to Art Murmur and the throngs it attracts. The Piedmont Avenue Art Walk works because it's not trying to be another Murmur — it's happy with its quirkiness and fun because of it.

BEST ART HANG-OUT

The Compound Gallery & Studios

1667 65th St., Oakland, 510-861-1702, TheCompoundGallery.com

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Readers Poll Winners

BEST ANNUAL EVENT
Oakland Art & Soul

BEST ARTIST
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BEST ART GALLERY
Vessel Gallery

BEST ARTS ORGANIZATION
Pro Arts

BEST BAND
Aja Vision (formerly Psychic Handbook)

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Larry Trujillo, the Uptown Nightclub

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Mo'Fone

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BEST LOCAL AUTHOR
Michael Chabon

BEST LOCAL BLOG OR WEBSITE
Oakland Local

BEST LOCAL BOOK
The Essential Urban Farmer — Novella Carpenter

BEST LOCAL FILM OR DOCUMENTARY
Hella Brown: Real Sax in the City

BEST POET
Jamie DeWolf

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Tourette's Without Regrets

& Studios is a unique place to chill and appreciate all the creativity the community has to offer. Owners Matt and Lene Reynoso have been running their world-class gallery for more than five years, and every year they add more and more creative outlets treading new ground in what is possible in local art. This past year was their biggest yet. In addition to the successful art subscription service Art in a Box — kind of like a CSA, where you pay for the art without knowing what you're going to get — The Compound recently installed an antique letterpress in its common area, offering workshops by letterpress master Rebecca Peters. The Reynosos' welcoming creative energy is infectious and magnetic and it's clear why they've been able to build this thriving artistic community in North Oakland.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY USE OF STREET ART

Endless Canvas

EndlessCanvas.com

Whether it's a sketchy Sharpie scrawl on the back of a BART seat or an intricate throw-up covering an abandoned warehouse wall, most street art has a fleeting shelf life. Regardless of the skill or effort that goes into a piece, it's usually only a matter of time before a fresh layer of paint effectively erases it from the public eye. That's why the photo blog and print line Endless Canvas is a crucial institution in the conservation of Bay Area street art. Since 2008, this artist's motley team of photographers has been tirelessly scouring the area's streets, rooftops, rail yards, and alleyways to take pics of any and all things graffiti — including local tags like Fword and Jurnn and artwork by big-name out-of-towners. In the process, the group has played a major role in documenting the local history and evolution of a largely outlaw art form.

BEST MUSEUM

Oakland Museum of California

1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org

If you came of age in the East Bay, you were probably carted on at least one elementary school outing to the Oakland Museum of California. If you haven't been back since, you might remember the museum only for its dusty Ohlone Indian artifacts and taxidermied native Californian wildlife. But you'd be remiss to write off the decades-old Oakland institution as nothing more than a stodgy receptacle of times past. In recent years the museum has seen a revolutionary revision of its galleries, exhibition spaces, and public events. By hosting contemporary art exhibits like local cartoonist Daniel Clowes' first museum retrospective, major traveling exhibitions like *The 1966 Exhibit* and offbeat interactive programming like The Oakland Standard, the Oakland Museum of California has reasserted itself as a relevant and powerful community asset — one that deserves a second, third, and even a fourth visit.

BEST ANNUAL EVENT

Art & Soul Oakland

ArtandSoulOakland.com

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year Art & Soul has earned its place as not just the city's premier annual event, but the entire East Bay's. It works because it celebrates the best of Oakland and the region — diversity, music, arts, food, an independent spirit and plenty of sunshine — in a communal, inclusionary setting that draws visitors from throughout the Bay Area. Most summer festivals are either geared toward niche audiences or diluted to the point of being generic. Art & Soul, however, is designed for a general audience while remaining loyal to a homegrown ethos, including local bands, artists, and chefs. While the price of admission has inched up over the years, advance tickets remain at $10 and kids under twelve still get in free. This year's festival features headliners Lalah Hathaway, Souls of Mischief and Lyrics Born with extended hours on Saturday until midnight. Full disclosure: For the first time, the *Express* is co-presenting the festival with the City of Oakland this year.

ART MURMUR AFTER PARTY

Rec Center Studios

1701 Martin Luther King Jr Way, Oakland, Facebook.com/TheRecCenter

Breaking free from its typical Art Murmur evening has never been easier with the advent of Rec Center Studios' infamous First Friday after-parties. For a measly five dollars, you'll rub elbows with multitudes of Kraayshawn doppelgangers and a variety of other individuals — many donning ironic mustaches — at this quintessential twentysomething Oakland hangout. Eye candy aside, what the Rec Center really delivers is the music. Never disappointing, the diverse array of acts represent a wide range of genres, from Nineties-inspired Bay Area rap to chillwave. It's no surprise, then, that with admission into Rec Center Studios also comes an immediate desire to dance, that even the most modest of individuals will find downright unextinguishable. Simply show up with an extended nightcap and the capacity to party 'til the sun comes up and enjoy what might arguably be the best party of the month.

MOST IMAGINATIVE INSTRUMENTALIST

Nate Brenner

NateBrenner.com

In the past two years, the Bay Area has seen a rash of garage bands that feature jazz musicians. Some of them have long romanticized the idea of playing rock'n roll; others consider it a dalliance. Some, like bassist Nate Brenner, want to find creative ways to meld current pop forms with their antecedents. That's a dicey proposition, but Brenner has pulled it off in his bands Beepl and DJAF YADs, and in his solo electronic project Nayironix. The artist's new *EP* is a far cry from the jazz trio he used to play with at Albatross Pub with pianist Michael Coleman and drummer Sam Ospovat, but it's certainly a fascinating work of art. Accompanied by a few select guests — including UpUpAnDe singer Merrill Garbus — Brenner sings over programmed drums, looped keyboards, and the occasional garbled horn section, often letting the tunes devolve into free-ranging sounds. He tries his hand at a ballad, a cling-clang cover of Janet Jackson's "What Have You Done for Me Lately?", and a giddy dance track that could almost be a children's song. Brenner could probably reproduce most of his songs on a laptop computer alone, but it would be hard for a lesser musician to imitate them.

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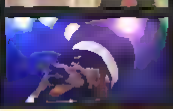
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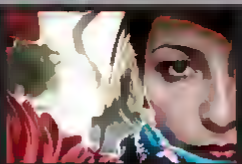
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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST ANNUAL EVENT

Beast Crawl

A lactury event such as the Beast Crawl has been lacking overdue in the East Bay! — *Lily Chun Davis*

How Berkeley Can You Be?

Bring it back! — *Greg Keldon*

Mission Creek Outdoor Music and Arts Festival

I may be biased (I but doing it is a lot of fun. — *Kiyomi Famouye*

Piedmont Pet Mayor Contest

A DOG or other animal gets to be mayor, very cool! — *Noel K*

Scottish Highland Gathering and Games

Guys in kilts — need I say more? — *Gabrielle Brown Wing*

The Accidental Dog Show at Hillside Swedenborgian Community Church

Any dog can accidentally win and actually does. Ribbons and prizes for all. Categories of competition that fit your dog. — *Eileen Andrade*

Yiddish Lyd Shmoot

This is probably the only city in the country where Lubavitchers, modern Orthodox Conservative, Reform Renewal Secular Humanist and unaffiliated Jews come together for the annual all night Shmoot study. — *yhlig*

Wurstfest Festival, El Cerrito

Every year on the Fourth of July a park in El Cerrito turns into a really big party! World Music bands play on a huge stage all day long ... thousands of people show up and there's so much to see and do. Booths, music... all sorts of people you know! It's a blast. Seriously! El Cerrito ... it's crazy that this thing happens, but it's great! — *The Wacky Itchen*

BEST ARTIST

Alex Purbee

Death. Destruction. All done with a spidery hand! — *Jamie DeWolf*

Darius Yorker

My twelve-year-old son Darius is the raddest — *cwarne*

Farnaz Shokraeva

Most unique art medium. Engraves art using her dental tools into porcelain bathtubs — *Shari Goldman*

High on Fire

REHAB — *Elka Kerl*

Jon Carling

His whimsical pen-and ink work, often etched onto the sepia tones of yellowing book covers, are populated by otherworldly chimerae, fantastic patterns and skinny mad humans and cute animals calmly navigating impossible worlds. JonCarling.com — *Dan Abbott*

He may be operating in pop, but at the end of the day, he's still a jazz composer

BEST EAST BAY PRODUCED FANZINE

Degenerate

P.O. Box 3732 Berkeley, DegenerateEphemera.blogspot.com

Cutting through the cultural thicket of unauthentic reblogged Tumblr posts and ceaselessly banal, half hearted Twitter commentary stands *Degenerate*, a locally produced, punk-influenced fanzine. Produced by writer and musician Sam Lefebvre, the zine conjures Situationist style analysis alongside thoughtful musical insights that shunt current the lowly standards of current music criticism without falling victim to any level of pretentiousness. Now in its tenth issue, *Degenerate* is a tabloid size publication with a meticulously styled black and-white aesthetic that stages a de facto insurrection within the reader's thoughts in ways that Instagram simply cannot. And with the most recent release containing a rare interview with Michael Gira (Swans), a thought experiment with Meredith Graves (Shoppers), and various perceptive album reviews, its going rate of three dollars is practically a steal.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY WAY TO [illegible] MUSIC ONLINE

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DeliRadio.com

Seriously it's kind of a wonder nobody thought of this before. Streaming Internet radio that's infinitely customizable — not just by genre, but by geographic origin and location of upcoming shows, meaning that you'll never again be faced with the great indignity of discovering a band you love online only to find that they're not planning on playing any shows close to you any time soon. Better yet, it's totally free with absolutely zero ads. The Berkeley-based company was founded by longtime musicians and music fans, and it shows: This is a music service that's mutually advantageous to bands (by allowing them to directly hype their shows to the people they already know are listening to them) and to fans (did we mention there's no ads thing???).

BEST BIG PLAY ON A SMALL STAGE

God's Plot

ShotgunPlayers.org

At a time when theater companies across the board are vexed about their survival, Shotgun Players is growing in its probable growth chart. The twenty-year-old company which started as a nomadic troupe but found mooring at The Ashby Stage in 2004, now has the wherewithal to hire a modest number of union actors. And its ambitions outpace those of many peers in the local scene. Shotgun is famous for putting on giant sprawling productions at little-known venues and contemporary spaces — stuff that the average company would deem too costly or too risky for both. Yet Shotgun has never suffered for thinking big and acting accordingly. It capped off its 2011 season with *God's Plot*, a fabulously weird premiere by local playwright and director Mark Jackson. Featuring ten actors and two musicians, it's a send-up in the 17th-century colonial satire called *Yin Hare & Ye Cubb*, which Jackson said, was the first play

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SFBG.COM





Beat blues club Capri Lounge — Chris Duffey

to ever be staged in the United States. *God's Plot* reimagined the historical circumstances under which that play was birthed drawing parallels to contemporary discussions of religion and censorship. Shrewd and marvelously entertaining, it's worthy of a second run — if another company will risk it.

BEST BLUES CLUB

Capri Lounge

474 Roland Way, Oakland, 510-635-8100, DMCEasyArea.com/capri/rentsel.html

Jimmie's Entertainment Complex, the self proclaimed "grown folkschub" popularly known as Sweet Jimmie's, may be a thing of the past but its spirit lives on at the Capri Lounge, where line-dancers doing the Electric Slide fill the floor especially during Sunday-evening blues-jam sessions hosted by Billy and the Thrillers. The band, led by vocalist Billy Pigrum has been an institution in the Hegenberger Road area on the airport side of I-880 for four decades. It may no longer boast a big horn section but the band still features saxophonist Carl Green one of the booth est tence blowers in the Bay Area. Past jammers at the 225-capacity club unconspicuously tucked away in an otherwise quiet business park, include vocalists Nat Bolden, Ella Pennewell and Mingle Turner singing pianist Lady Bianca, singing guitarist Steve Gannon singing bassist Bobby Reed, and drummer Frank Samuels. The Sunday jam begins at 6:30 p.m. There's also a jazz jam at 8 p.m. on Thursdays and Henry Clement brings in his zydeco and New Orleans R&B band on the first Friday of each month.

BEST ROVING VENUE

Lorry the Bus

Local promoters and organizers have found all kinds of creative ways to contend with the dearth of all ages music venues in the East Bay from seizing parking lots to setting up amphitheaters in Frank Ogawa Plaza and launching battles of the bands in unlikely settings (e.g., Ex-president College for Digital Arts). But none have been quite as imaginative as John Benson, who purchased the first of two AC Transit buses in 2007 both of which he ultimately donated to the punk community. A congenital altruist co-op founder, and free-minded activist Benson has long been active in the grassroots music scene — he played bass in the popular Nineties band A Minor Forest — and he had no apprehension about letting a younger generation of punks turn his buses into roving venues. Over the years though he's expanded the concept beyond music. Benson's current bus, which he christened "Larry" in honor of its previous owner has featured free stand-up comedy nights, art exhibitions, and film screenings in a setting that's more comfortable than most warehouses or galleries — Benson gutted all the seats and installed carpeting, as it's a fine place to sit on the floor. It's needed a few costly repairs over the years, but Benson has always found a way to make do. Hopefully he'll keep it running for a long time.

MOST INVENTIVE REUSE OF A JAZZ CLUB

SF Sketchfest at Yoshi's

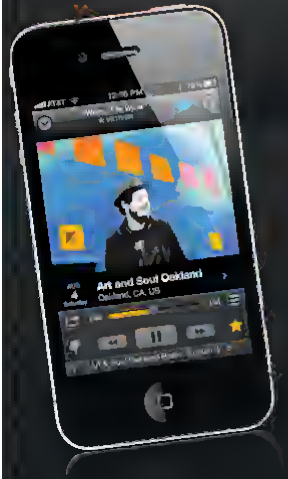
510 Embarcadero West, Oakland, 510-238-9200, Yoshis.com

Market exigencies forced Yoshi's to diversify its programming, but shrewd artistic direction led it to make choices that went far beyond what a mere business plan demanded. Most exciting of all was the venue's recent foray into comedy — not just the setup-punchline, lloyd, but veritable performance art. That impulse led Oakland bowler David Lloyd to join forces with SF Sketchfest the annual three-week festival that draws sizable crowds to San Francisco venues. Lloyd convinced the festival organizers

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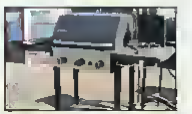
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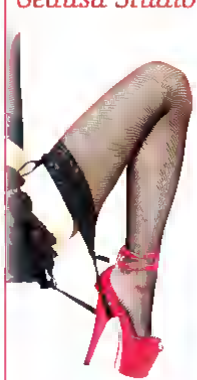
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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST ART EXHIBIT

Daniel Clowes at the Oakland Museum of California
So awesome! Oakland based artist, great cartoons.... ek. — *Chris Voss*

Johannes Peppolo (anything)
THEY ARE GOOD — *Ellen Karl*

Oakland Museum of California
Their rotating, exhibit of the messiest leaves that variety is the spice of life. — *Tom Walton*

R. Black, graphic artist
Poster designs for Shotgun Players have been amazing. — *Taylor Gonzalez*

The Great Wall of Oakland
Also can we please stop the awful Transthunk public art? (I'm thinking especially of every piece of outdoor art in Berkeley as an example of how not to do anything interesting, ever). We have such creative and eclectic artists — let's get them on our streets! — *poppiinlinsky*

BEST ART GALLERY

CK Gallery
Always interesting and well curated. Charlotte does so much with the small space she has to work with and always has thought-provoking shows chock a block full of great (and affordable) art! — *Jennifer Holmes*

BEST BAND

Ashoka
My kid loves him and is becoming a groupie. — *Alissa Hauser*

Debby Jon Rook and the Children Mactoggits
Touring and recording constantly responsible for some of the best independent music (and the most ridiculous name) anywhere, this may be the hardest working band in the Bay Area. With hilarious lyrical barbs, witchy-as-hell songwriting ("pretty songs about awful things") and seemingly boundless energy, the duo of Dan Abbott and Corbett Redford are making the impossible seem inevitable. — *Dan Abbott*

Cash Pony
Electric star and they shred. Duh. — *Stphn Wright*

Cyclopiyguni
A REALLY REFRESHING NEW KIND OF METAL — *alyse camille*

Dirty Hand Family Band
I'm a sucker for a good harmonica player — *zoeeyes6*

Frozen Folk
Awesome, new "sophisticated punkish" band from Oakland — *Patrick Friedman*

One in the Chamber
Oakland speed metal at its finest — *Sam Khandaghahadi*

to trek across the bay this year for two shows at Yoshi's Oakland location, both featuring high profile acts. Ann Magnuson did her modern spin-off of "Victorian drawing room entertainment," while comedian/beatboxer/loop-machine artist Reggie Watts shared a stage with Blue Note pianist Robert Glasper. The latter show had the feel of a jam session, and most likely it was entirely improvised — Watts said he'd only met Glasper a couple times, and they didn't have time to rehearse. But that didn't matter. The two artists matched each other in talent and sensibility, and their preferences seemed to overlap. Watts vocalized a snare and high hat over Glasper's gospel chord changes, and the pianist answered with a near-perfect Jay-Z impersonation. Clearly jazz has a new fan.

BEST SINGER

Viveca Hawkins

Facebook.com/VivecaHawkins

With her tattoos and gutsy jewelry singer Viveca Hawkins looks like a dyed in the-wool punk diva, and, fittingly, she's best known for fronting popular garage outfit The Memorials. But Hawkins' appearance belies her upbringing. She learned to sing in church, served in the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, accompanied jazz combos, and honed her pipes at the well-reputed Berklee College of Music in Boston. In short, she's the kind of vocalist who could have easily spent her career standing in a pew or draping her voice over a piano. Hawkins might have done just that had she not hooked up with former Mars Volta drummer Thomas Pridgen and decided to reinvent herself in rock. Now she pits her soulful vibrato-laden vocals against pulverizing drums and reverb-heavy guitar riffs. It's a fascinating combination that hasn't yet caught the attention of mainstream rock consumers though Hawkins certainly has her own cult following in the East Bay. And she's still endlessly versatile, able to sing hooks on rap songs (like "Get Off Me" by Mike-Dash-E) or croon over a bass section. Just listen to The Memorials' jazzy, thrash number "Day Dreamer" and you'll hear those church roots coming out.

BEST ACTOR

Kendra Lee Oberhauser

Whether she's playing a petulant tomboy in a Jon Tracy remake of *Antigone* an alpha wife in Alan Ayckbourn's *The Norman Conquests* or a malevolent financial management vixen in Central Works' *Reduction to Force*, Berkeley actress Kendra Lee Oberhauser inhabits all of her characters with verve. She's a fine-featured blonde who can easily morph into a femme fatale whether or not you shot her with a weapon or a pair of stiletto heels. And she'll handle just about any role: Olivia in *Twelfth Night*; Mina Murray in *Dracula*; the evil boss in a Wall Street farce *Peppy*; Norton Taylor in *Noises Off*; the plucky servant Lotka in *Arms and the Man*. This spring Oberhauser starred in a Sleepwalkers Theatre production of Adam Chazin's *Down to This*, a pulpy revenge story with two different endings. She's one of the few local actresses who consistently land big parts, and has evidently formed strong relationships with many local companies. For someone operating in a cutthroat and ever-shrinking medium that's no small feat.

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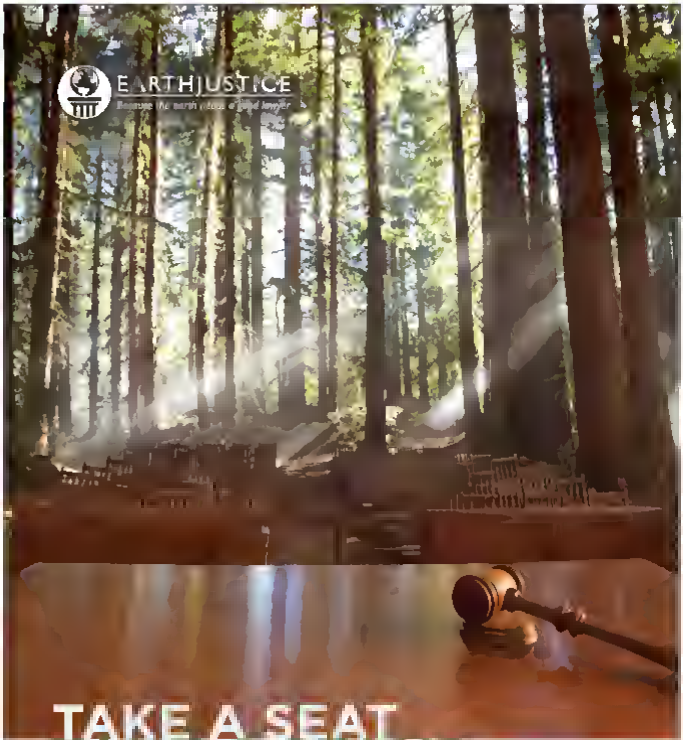
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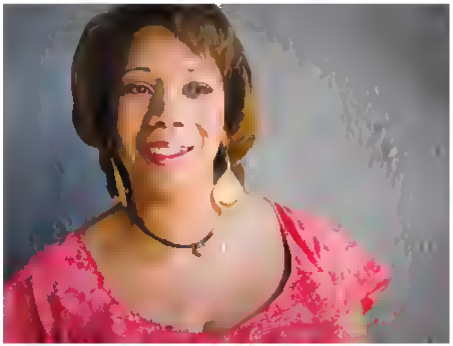


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Best Comedian Robin Cee — Chris Duffey

BEST COMEDIAN

Robin Cee

RobinCee.biz

At six foot-one with big hoop earrings Oakland comedian Robin Cee cuts a striking figure — she might not look like a celebrity per se but she's the kind of person who will attract eyes upon walking into a room. That's not to mention her voice which generally hovers in the low gravelly female baritone register. For a comedian that's a great asset. When Cee headlined Comedy Off Broadway at Miss Pearl's Jam House in January, she regaled a small but rapt audience with spot-on impressions of Margo Simpson, Ethel Merman and Macy Gray. She was also charmingly self-deprecating, describing herself as "the dorky black chick who always gets thrown on cold bills." (Her material is clean, which actually makes her an outlier in the Bay Area comedy scene.) Cee's website includes a GIF of the comedian busting a few freaky moves on her lawn. The tagline: "Am I dancing... or in pain?" Oh, come on. It's cute.

BEST RAP FLIP

Main Attrakionz

MainAttrakionz.com

The fact that Oakland rappers Squadda B and Mondre M.A.N. can best their peers without focusing too intently on their lyrics (they mostly float on weed, swagger, women, and hustling, occasionally name-checking civil rights heroes) is testament to the importance of delivery in hip-hop. The two are, indeed, fluid and capable rappers, intoning their lines in a light conversational slur and always sitting in the pocket of the beat. Their beats, for that matter, are beautiful. The duo's 2011 mixtape, *Rollin' & Dark Grapes II*, features beats by a wide roster of producers, all of them trafficking in a high treble haze that's quite unlike the blues-based hip-hop of twenty years ago. Markee B. Friendsane Keyboard Kid AHYVE, Silky Johnson, Floyd Waybetter Georges MoMurda Clams Casino Noelboa and Bea Productions all participated in that album but the palette is remarkably consistent. It's got all the signifiers of contemporary "cloud rap" — a raunky, melodic sound, 808 percussion and orchestration that occasionally overpowers the vocals — and the added benefit of two incredibly nimble emcees.

BEST DJ NIGHT

UltraWave

Every Thursday night at SomaR, 1727 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-564-3147 SomarBar.com

If you had to create a hagiography of East Bay DJs, it would certainly include Digital Underground emeritus DJ Fuze — who was once a veritable titan of the hip-hop scene, but ultimately reinvented himself as a world music connoisseur — and it would also have to footnote the members of Local 1200, a crew that sounds, indeed, like a labor union but refers in this case to the secret that once rocked shows at La Peña Cultural Center and eventually gave rise to local R&B diva Goapele. (Her brother Nanpune Mokhtabane was a founding member.) And you'd be remiss not to mention two of the kingpins of Local 1200, Willie Maxx and Sake-1, who both managed to attain real staying power in hip-hop. It turns out they all convene in downtown Oakland every Thursday for a night of soul, turf house, and world music hits with a distinctively international sensibility. The event also features Filipino fusion cuisine by Needa Bee, and it's held at one of Oakland's most stylish venues.

BEST JAM SESSION

Improvised Music Session

Every first Sunday at Bar Three Fifty-Five 355 18th St., Oakland, Facebook.com/ ThreeFiftyFive

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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST BOOKER AT A CLUB

Julian "Pookrown" Gillespie
SHI ROCKs. — *Elka Kerl*

Kristen at Ashkenaz
She's not drunk or coked up. — *Cindy Kaldor*

Larry Trujillo
Easy to work with. Pro. — *Jason Isaacs*

Mike Spagnolino, Layover Comedy Night at the Layover Music Bar
OK it's me. — *Mike Spagelman*

Scott Abrahamson
Chaos productive, punk-rock booker — Chris Voss

BEST CLUB

Elena Yakovlev
Where else can you walk in for a drink on a Tuesday night and see a world-class flamenco group for $7? — *Karen Hester*

Yoshi's Oakland
Jazz/jazz — *Anne-Sue Silvestre*

BEST DANCE CLUB

Ashkenaz
TODDLERS ALLOWED
UUUUUUUUUUUCK. — *Elka Kerl*

The Layover
Mellow place, not too big, not too small, and good DJs, best of all, no cover — *Josh Kemper*

BEST LOCAL AUTHOR

Alice Walters
Her cookbooks count. — *Susan Pfiefer*

Kristin Lotz
Her novel *The Edge of Maybe* captures the essence of the middle-class academic/yogamista East Bay experience! — *Seth White*

Floor Da Liz
The wickest blogger in the bay who documents dungeons and sex parties, all in the dark. She's fearless and many-sharp. — *Jaime DeWolf*

BEST LOCAL BLOG OR WEBSITE

Berkeleyside
The bible — *Matt Klotz*

Daily Kos
The man does live in Berkeley, right? And has national impact — *Alden Mudge*

Oakland Local
Sorry, EBX, but you can't beat the grassroots appeal — *Raines Cohen*

BEST PROTEST ARTIST

Rants Riley
Without an ego. He was up with a bullhorn at every Occupy event. This is man who is more than just his music. — *Jaime DeWolf*

incestuous ensembles, and featured mostly in warehouse shows or people's living rooms. This year drummer Sam Ospovat sought to rectify the problem and make the Bay Area's avant-garde scene a little more accessible. A member of Beep! Kapowbow, Oakland Active Orchestra Antester and several other antfits — and a frequent sideman for (fellow Best Of winner) Nate Brenner — Ospovat is one of the more prolific instrumentalists around, and he was eager to refashion himself as an arts booster. In March he devised a new jam session that would mix straight-ahead be-bop with "outsider" free jazz, in a way that would remain palatable. He was more interested in producing great improvised music than in providing jazz neophytes with a primer. Thus the Improvised Music Session was born. It happens every first Sunday of the month and features an hour-long set by Antester followed by a free-for-all that lasts way into the night. Because of the bar's central location a genuinely mixed crowd shows up, which is unusual for improvised music. To some of them it's still just noise to others it's a great addition to the arts district. For Ospovat it's a welcome opportunity to play.

MOST INSPIRING PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

Cal Performances

CalPerfs.Berkeley.edu

When you've put together a world-class performing arts lineup year after year for about a century, one of the inevitable consequences is that people start taking you for granted. But Bay Area residents should never forget what a treasure they have in Cal Performances. It isn't just the sheer spectacles we're treated to, such as the Peking Acrobats and their amazing feats of strength and balance and Yo-Yo Ma doing his thing. Beyond that we've found the various performances and lectures at Zellerbach Hall and other associated venues to be a consistent source of inspiration. Haruki Murakami (perhaps the world's greatest living writer) has inspired us to write. NPR's radical groundbreakers (Ira Glass, Jad Abumrad, Robert Krulwich and company) have inspired us to think of new ways to tell stories. And countless others have inspired us — rendered us speechless, really — with performances that testify to the power of hard work and the single-minded pursuit of a dream.

BEST UNDER 21 HANGOUT

924 Gilman

924 Gilman St., Berkeley, 510-524-9180, 924Gilman.org

There's a tendency for out-of-touch older folks to write off the hobbies and pursuits of the young as somehow less genuine or important than those of the "glory days." That's no less true for disenchanted former punks many of who have been heard to lament 924 Gilman's alleged spiral into mediocrity. "It's just not the same as it used to be" is a common complaint. Sure, the all ages, volunteer-run punk venue has seen a few changes (indoor smoking was banned a few years back and door prices have indeed gone up. (In what other venue hasn't this happened?) But the reality is that the punk rock institution has stayed remarkably true to its roots in that it still introduces adolescents to the Bay Area's

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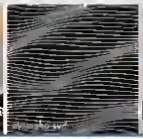
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vast and thriving musical subculture. Where else can a fourteen-year-old catch a raucous lineup of bands, learn the politics of circle pitting, catch a tug in a slimy bathroom and then get picked up by her loving parents — all in one evening? There's nothing quite like that sweat-drenched adrenaline-fueled feeling of pure contentment that follows a young man's first few Gilman shows. In a word: it's magical.

BEST CREATIVE SPACE TO GET YOUR GLITTER ON

Teahouse Studio

1250 Addison St., Ste. 208, Berkeley, 510-845-1130, TeahouseArtStudio.com

Yes, Virginia, there is a Room of One's Own for those who want to tap into their creative juices — and it's in Berkeley. Teahouse Studio in the Strawberry Creek Design Center is a cheerful, colorful, spunky art space that hosts such a variety of classes you'll be sure to find your niche. Founders Mari Rose McDonough, Tiffany Moore and Stefanie Renee — all working artists themselves — offer everything from glitter-bomb classes (yes, you can cover almost anything in glitter!) to image-transferring, printmaking, painting, writing, and silversmithing workshops. Classes range from $25 day-longs to $500 weekend stints (which usually include catered lunches). McDonough, Moore and Stefanie Renee are convinced that it's not just the space but the people that create the Teahouse spark. "There's something so exciting about people coming together and connecting over art," McDonough said. We agree.

BEST SMALL JAZZ VENUE

Cosmo's Jazz Spot

4609 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, 510-517-3911, CosmosJazzSpot.com

Looking for a little piece of the Village in Oakland? Check out Cosmo's Jazz Spot, a gem so hidden that if you don't know what you're looking for you can easily miss it. At five hundred square feet, Cosmo's is definitely cozy: owner Rob Biggle opened the venue in 2011 not only as a place for musicians to practice, record, teach and perform (basic equipment is available for rent) but also to "spread the joy in the neighborhood and make music happen." Recent performers have included Andrea Clabum and Joe Howard, Danny Caron and Good Heads, Four and More, and Mario Guarneri's trio. Cosmo's rough edges are part of its charm, said Four and More lead singer Kathy Blackburn. "It sort of feels like I'm in the Village in New York City — kind of divey, but in a good way."

BEST COMEDIC PERFORMANCE

Seth Meyers at Zellerbach Hall

When *Saturday Night Live*'s Seth Meyers performed at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall in February, he branched out from his usual sketch comedy for a stand-up routine that was controversial, charming, and downright hilarious. Meyers shared his awkward encounters (yes, there were multiple) with President Obama — like his first run-in in 2007, when he suggested that Obama couldn't

Categories We Didn't Think Of

BEST OPEN MIC
DEC's Bar and Bistro
— Hannah Weidmuller

BEST GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Elke Barter
At Elke Barter.com, of course (that's not this is a plug, and doesn't count)
— Elke Barter

BEST MOVIE THEATER
Pinole Cinemas Cerrito
Movies, food, and drinks — what's not to love! *— kjhbhfg*

BEST HOMEGROWN SHOW
HOODSLAM
Rock-Well all cam *— Caitlin Cahill*

BEST UNDERGROUND WAREHOUSE TO SEE A SHOW
Ships Mountain
— Chris Vees

BEST QUEER WOMEN DANCE EVENT MONTHLY
Ships in the Night at the Roots
— Lara Rodrigues

BEST PLACE FOR BRAZILIAN CULTURE
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Great capoeira classes for kids and dance classes *— Christiane Hartmann*

BEST ART GALLERY AND WONDERFUL OPENINGS – FREE WINE AND NIBBLES!
Nash Gallery
The Nash Gallery hosts an annual "paint out" festival usually in the fall. The artists are amazing, as are their "plein air" works. The Nash Gallery professionally hangs and displays all the entries, provides an accomplished judge for "best of show," lots of good food and wine and truly excellent art loving company. Try it! You'll love it! *— Kathryn Leume*

BEST RADIO STATION
KPFA
— Ann Garrison

BEST FILM FESTIVAL
Oakland Underground Film Festival
— Cate Freyer

BEST COMEDY SHOW
Laporte Comedy Night
Weekly show since January 2010, featuring Bay Area comedians. Second Tuesday of the month at the Women's Showcase, sponsored by local business FeelMore360. *— Mike Spangrud*

Opera

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Double Bill

Mahagonny Songspiel
Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht

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August 3 at 8 pm



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pull off (physically or metaphorically) a Halloween mask. He also shared punchlines too dark for his "Weekend Update" segment. "A Germina man missing both his arms stole a TV set from an electronics store. Police said he was easy to catch because he was unarmed." Meyers concluded with an anecdote that involved a bar in Las Vegas, a bully, and too much alcohol. The comedian accidentally brushed an aggressive musclenan, and when the dude told him he needed to be respectful, Meyers replied, "The three people I respect most in this world are my dad, for making me the man I am today; Nelson Mandela, for ending apartheid in South Africa; and you." Meyers was on the ground within five seconds.

BEST PROGRAM TO ENGAGE YOUTH

Bay Area Girls Rock Camp

455 17th St., Ste. 302, Oakland, 510-267-1806
BayAreaGirlsRockCamp.org

While it's true that the world is populated by plenty of badass female musicians (Alice Bag, Exene Cervenka, and Shannon Shaw, to name just a few), it's also true that punk and rock 'n' roll bands are still dominated by dudes. And for young ladies new to a respective music scene, that lack of female presence can be enough to make joining a band seem inconceivable — and being a positive audience member feel like a par for the course. That's why Bay Area Girls Rock Camp — a weeklong program for eight- to eighteen-year-old girls that teaches them how to play instruments, form bands, write songs, and play a live show — is possibly the most feminele-empowering summer camp out there. What's more, the nonprofit also hosts a three-day Ladies Rock Camp for women over eighteen — because after all, you're never too old (or too female) to rock.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY ARTIST COLLECTIVE

Firehouse Art Collaborative

3192 Adeline St., Berkeley, 3228 Adeline St., Berkeley, 1835 Harmon St., Berkeley, 1780 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 5859 Shellmound St., Emeryville, 510-219-8689, FirehouseArtCollective.BlogSpot.com

Since founding its original location on Harmon Street eight years ago, Firehouse Art Collaborative has built a revolutionary community of artists by doing one simple thing: not charging. While the community has grown and evolved, the mission statement remains uncompromised. "We believe, in collaboration not competition and being inclusive over exclusivity," said Tom Francis, executive director. The collaborative, which organically sprang from the desire to provide a place for artists to go following art school, to avoid a sense of isolation, has expanded to include the healing arts performers and food crafters among others. As such it encompasses multiple live-work locations, a new space can now be up and running in a year without the use of grants or other outside funding, and the atmosphere of collaboration and investment in the community is undeniable. Artists work together on pieces which are shown in Francis's Co-Lab shows and come together to put on weekly bazaars at the Adeline location with the mission of making their work, and the arts, 100-percent approachable for the general public. A new venture into microstorefronts furthers this idea of approachability, with artists able to sell their work to the public while generating excitement together and sharing the responsibility of the lease. Look for an expansion into Oakland, large sculpture installations in Emeryville, and possible collaborations with the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in the future.

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July 19 7:30PM
Works include *Appalachian Spring*, *Rhapsody in Blue* and Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*.
Featuring charlesSCHWAB



The Wizard of Oz: Movie Night with the SFS
July 26, 27 7:30PM
Watch the classic movie *The Wizard of Oz* while the San Francisco Symphony plays the synchronized score live. Costumes welcome.
SF



my classic Dvořák
July 20 7:30PM
Works include Carnival Overture, Cello Concerto and Symphony No. 9 "From the New World."



Pixar in Concert with the SFS
July 28 7:30PM
July 29 2:00PM
Experience scores from favorite Pixar films like *Toy Story*, *Up*, and more as the SFS accompanies visually stunning clips from each movie. Pixar's Chief Creative Officer John Lasseter will introduce the program from the stage on July 28, and Director Pete Docter will introduce the program on July 29.
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Tiempo Libre with the SFS
July 2 7:30PM
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Best way to bring back dapper: Temescal Alley Barber Shop. Chris Duffey

BEST OLD-FASHIONED BARBER SHOP

Temescal Alley Barber Shop

4708 40th St., Oakland, 510 761 5074, TemescalAlleyBarberShop.Tumblr.com

Tucked in a cubbyhole space on a side alley behind a cluster of popular restaurants, the Temescal Alley Barber Shop can't help but feel charming. (The same goes for the half-dozen other tiny storefronts in rejuvenated Temescal Alley: location is everything.) Peek inside and the spot only grows more irresistible: retro black-and-white floor tiles laid by co-owner and Oakland resident Fred Roberts, atop which lies a classic cowhide rug; three gorgeous vintage barber chairs, which at any given time are apt to be plumb full of three eager men and above it all the haircuts. Short on the sides and the back, tight to the ears, faded up to a slicked-back or neatly parted mop, clean and dapper as heck. The popular shop's three tattooed barbers will do you right for $22, though you may have to wait: they take walk-ins only. In the meantime, enjoy the vintage tunes — and, if you're lucky, a shot of liquor from the cabinet.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY SIGN COMPANY

Golden West Sign Arts

2810 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510 221 7924, GoldenWestSignArts.com

There's something very endearing about hand-painted signs: the careful and colorful brushstrokes so clearly put into each letter and character; the slight, human imperfections that make each one an unique; and the fact that they're one of the few things left in this world that weren't done using a computer. Unabashed Luddites rejoice: Golden West Sign Arts is reviving the art of traditional hand-painted signage, throughout the East Bay and beyond with its affordable, original sign painting, restoration jobs, and signature gold leaf work. Take a look around and you'll see that the small but stalwart company is being increasingly called upon by local businesses to paint everything from sidewalk signs and menu boards to lettering on trucks and boats. From the window of Sacred Rose Tattoo in Berkeley to the door of Cassava Restaurant in Oakland, it's clear that while computer-generated signage certainly dominates our visual landscape there's still love out there for something rendered by hand.

BEST EYEGLASS SHOP

Phoenix Optical

5519 College Ave., Oakland 510-597 1111

A word of advice for the visually impaired: If you're shopping for eyeglasses at Rockridge's Phoenix Optical, don't forget to wear your old pair because, you won't want to overlook any of the shop's thousands of unique frames. From rare wooden gems to good old-fashioned horn-rims and metal Sigrood cat-eyes, the shop's vintage, vintage-inspired and contemporary offerings are seemingly endless — and it can take what feels like an entire afternoon to peruse the many frames lining the walls and resting on trays stacked inside large storage cases. Make no mistake, some of Phoenix's frames will cost you a pretty penny, but it's a small price to pay for high-quality unique style and sharp vision (and the shop does accept insurance). And because the staff is totally game to make style suggestions and give you an honest assessment of what best suits your face, you'll leave knowing that your new frames are truly a sight to be seen.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

Sorbet Sandwiches at Scream Sorbet

5030 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-394-5030, ScreamSorbet.com

It's a well-known fact that we all scream for ice cream. A perhaps lesser-known fact is that some of those screams are being directed specifically toward ice cream's less fattening

Readers Poll Winners

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Temescal Alley Barber Shop

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Berkeley Bowl

BEST JEWELER
Pave Fine Jewelry Design

BEST MASSAGE
Trista Parrish at Elixir Salon

BEST NEW BUSINESS
Awaken Cafe

BEST PET STORE
Pet Food Express

BEST PIERCER
Aerik Martin at Fura Bodyworks

BEST PLANT NURSERY
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relative sorbet. Most notably Scream Sorbet — and most importantly the Oakland company's sorbet sandwiches. Gone are the days when our only option for a cold creamy dessert sandwiched between two baked goods was a scoop of vanilla ice cream mashed inside two soggy chocolate "cookies." Also gone is the notion that sorbet is somehow incapable of being a decadent and satiating dessert. If you're skeptical stop by Scream's Temescal storefront and pick up one of its pre-made sorbet sandwiches. The treats are hand-crafted from fresh-baked cookies and the company's signature sorbet and among the rotating and mouthwatering options are ingenious flavor combinations like cardamom-orange cookies with pistachio sorbet ginger-molasses cookies with coffee-almond sorbet and Meyer lemon cookies with pink lemon sorbet. *Ashhh*

MOST REVOLUTIONARY BUSINESS MODEL

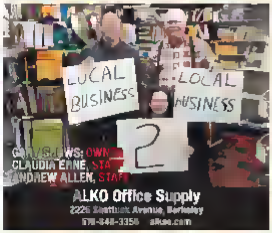
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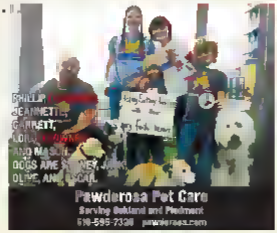
Whoever said that nothing in life is free has clearly never been to the Bay Area Free Book Exchange, where each weekend patrons are free to peruse the cluttered and haphazardly



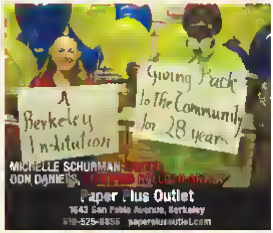
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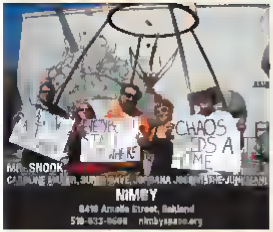
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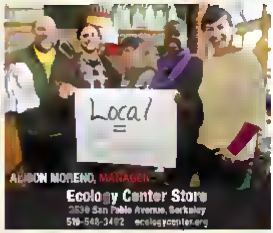
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510-842-7643 www.petamigos.net



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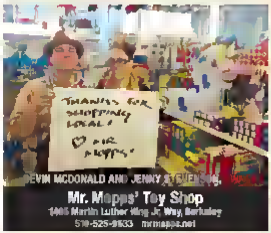
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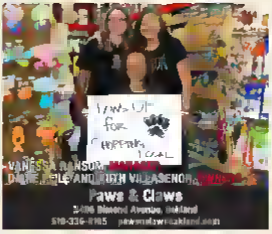
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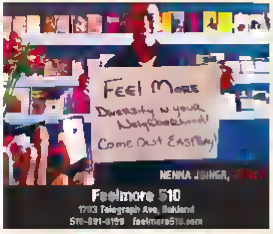
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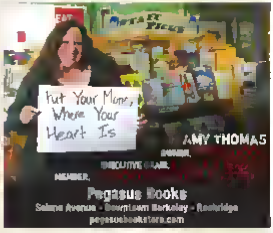
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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST BAKERY

Acme
Sorry La Farine, Betty...and others. Acme beats you all even if you all combined into one massive bakery. — *supergirl*

It's All Good Bakery
If you don't want to be hooked just don't go. — *Dance*

Merritt Bakery Oakland
They've really stepped up their game, and the strawberries and whipped cream cake is PHENOMENAL. And their prices beat anyone else's around. If you adjust some bakeries' tastier products by the cost of the item, Merritt Bakery comes out WAAAY ahead! — *hillth ak*

Market Bakery
What the hell is a Kunigin Amann? A heart attack on a four-inch plate, but oh, what a ride ... this is the most decadent pastry I've maybe ever had. For special occasions only. (For serious about the heart attack). — *poppymonday*

Tart's Sweets
This little bakery in the midst of Berkeley has brought much joy to me and my friends. — *Lucas Brandt*

BEST BARBERSHOP

Al's
Anyplace that puts a selection of vintage bikes outside is doing it right. — *Rafaela Cohen*

Mr. Lee's
Cheap, friendly — and vacuums your head when he's done! In Chinatown somewhere. — *Miranda Everitt*

Temescal Alley Barber Shop
I come here with my boyfriend and watch him get his hair cut. He always gets out of the door looking sexy and sharp! — *Bonnie Purdum*

BEST BIKE SHOP

Bikes 4 Life
Tony Coleman is one of the most positive forces in West Oakland. When he's not fixing bikes he's trying to pull this neighborhood together. — *Ann Garrison*

Mike's Bikes
Rad DIY workshops, excellent staff, hot mechanics. — *John Sheng*

Missing Link
The bike shop for people who actually ride. — *Tara Hohoh*

BEST BOOKSTORE

Book Zoo
Eric finds the wildest titles. — *Mariya Custodio*

Moe's Books
Please stay in business! — *tarmine, coco*

stacked shelves of the El Cerrito book "store" and emerge with an armload of books entirely on the house. To date, the exchange has given away hundreds of thousands of books — including campy romance novels, travel guides, and indisputable classics — amassed entirely from donations. (Organizers sell off some of the more valuable books on eBay to keep the otherwise nonprofit operation afloat.) To ensure that crafty patrons don't profit from the genre titles each book that exits the volunteer-run shop is marked by a red stamp that warns, "Not for resale. This is a free book." The only other stipulation is a generous one-hundred-book limit per person per day. One hundred books for zero bucks? That's quite a steal.

BEST TATTOOSHOP

Premium Tattoo

4130 Broadway Oakland, 510-922-8801
PremiumTattooOakland.blogspot.com

Matt Decker's Premium Tattoo shop is the place to go for unpretentious no-nonsense attitudes from friendly artists who are experts in a wide range of styles. Longtime Oaklander Decker opened Premium five years ago after paying his dues in other local shops, building a strong reputation for being the go-to guy for classic, Americana-style tattoos. These days, Premium is abuzz all day long with the hum of three machines. Matt has built a tight knit family of artists, including the talented Brett Baumgart, an artist whose specialty is rendering tattoos with breathtaking realism and Danielle Silva whose creativity is only matched by her super-fun, punky spirit. Decker is known for really taking the time to develop the concept and image with each client, making sure that the tattoo exceeds expectations before the needle hits skin. As evidenced by its rave online reviews, Premium is the place to go for friendly assistance in the planning and execution of your next ink.

BEST PLACE FOR THE APOCALYPSE

Team Print Shop

2500 Magnolia St., Oakland, 510-541-2865, TeamPrintShop.com

When the apocalypse rolls around, you'll need to stockpile weapons, silently rank your kids in order of importance and accurately evaluate your ability to stab a friend over the last Twinkie. But if the end of days is too much doom and gloom you'll be glad you hoarded tees from Oakland-based Team Print Shop, which specializes in cheeky riffs on recognizable logos and sayings. The custom design and printing company, run by John Keum and Loren Purcell, took off after Captain Meg Snoozeum wrote about the duds Bieber shirts — "Bieber" written like the logo for Slayer. "We tried to think of the toughest band we could think of and the smallest," said Keum. "It started as stupid things that make us laugh, but it led to serious business and other opportunities." Despite a surprising amount of hate mail from die-hard Slayer fans, they continued designing tees in their rare time off from printing for local companies such as Beer Revolution and Manifesto Bicycles. You can spot a T shirt featuring a potato in an A's hat (designed by an artist they met over beers at Lanesplitter) while riding the busiest CVS, or level a block in Team Print Shop's newest shirt: a cat splayed on a pile of money, in between the words "meow money meow problems." Laughter is, after all,

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MOST REVOLUTIONARY USE OF CARDBOARD

Convert Shoes

1844 Fourth St., Berkeley 510-984-0142, ConvertStyle.com

Fourth Street's Convert Shoes, located down the street from the original clothing store proves sustainable shoes aren't all bulky sandals and scratchy hemp. Owner Randy Brewer stocks the boutique with best-selling brands such as Melissa and Palladium and his exclusive vegan line with Jeffrey Campbell sometimes sells out before the shoes have a chance to hit the shelves. But look closer at the displays throughout the store and its collection of Civic Duty shoes to experience new uses for familiar material. San Francisco's John Lum Architecture transformed recycled cardboard into the boutique's sleek modern shelving, and Civic Duty's sneakers are made from the same Tyvek-reinforced paper used for FedEx envelopes. Other eye-pleasing sustainable elements include packing peanuts window displays, secondhand furniture from The Alameda Point Antiques Faire, and Brewer's collaboration with J Shoes, which lets him use dead-stock fabric to create an exclusive line of sustainable shoes for the boutique. Even old footwear standby Dr. Martens has jumped on the eco-friendly bandwagon with its canvas Shoreditch boot. Time to ditch those frumpy Tevas and show your feet, and the environment, some love.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY STRIP MALL

Temescal Alley and Alley 49

49th St., between Telegraph Ave. and Clarke St., Oakland

A strip mall? In Temescal? You betcha, and it's no surprise that the Oakland district's version of this suburban staple fills a string of old horse-stables-turned-carriage-houses-turned-storage-lockers off Telegraph. Even the shop names are enticing: Chuck out Fourth and Feast (offbeat home furnishings), Crimson Horticultural Rarities (antique botanicals, vintage collectibles, wedding design and floral staging), Marissa Haskell Design (Western-inspired jewelry,) Mind's Eye Vintage (thrifted, hard-to-find clothing), Oakland Dry Goods (locally made and organic urban pantry items) and Temescal Alley Barber Shop (haircuts and straight razor shaves $30). Who knew that in Temescal earning the nickname "mall rat" may just be a good thing?

BEST CURATED MAGAZINE SHOP

Issues Magazines + More

29 Glen Ave., Oakland 510-652-5700, IssuesShop.com

In an alienated world filled with iProducts and Internet based content there's almost nothing more liberating than entering into the tiny magazine shop Issues, with the sole intent of leaving with a handful of real-life publications. With magazines and newspapers lining its interior walls the shop gives off a pleasant library-like feeling. And despite the store's wide selection, the publication mix seem meticulously hand-selected... allowing for a sort of serendipity that has become almost obliterated with the advent of the Internet. Pairing these interior values with its friendly and seemingly all knowing staff, Issues can turn even the most devout techie into a full-fledged bibliophile with its endless literary possibilities. Boasting an array of rags that range from full-color design magazines to DIY fanzines the store ensures you'll leave with fresh prints that will electrify your desire to consume the written word in its physical form.

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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST BREWERY

Drake's Brewing

I know everyone else is voting for Linden Street Int Drake's is the East Bay's unsung hero — a great range of delicious beers, and really friendly folks. Ride your bike through the Home Depot parking lot, around the Walmart, and face then barred house to sample some great local brew — *poojitmarsky*

Linden Street Brewery

Hella local — *Caped Benjamin*

Triple Rock

Anybody but Pyramid — *Tom Walton*

BEST CANNABIS DISPENSARY

EPIC on Telegraph

Charlie (I think that's your name?), you are so hot. And the busy, organic outdoor salvia for $40 I guess one shop can have it all. — *supergirl*

BEST CAR REPAIR

Jensen Simon at Kensington Chevron

Jason is the absolute BEST! For the first time in years I feel like I can trust my mechanic. After a brake job about every three months at another mechanic I stopped and talked to Jason. He did my next brake job and is now doing my next one — 2 years and 21K miles later. He remembers my name and takes superb care of my car troubleshoots the funny problems I have had on a 12 year-old car until he solves the problem and it doesn't cost me an arm and a leg. On top of all that he has old-fashioned ethics, stands behind his work, and contributes to the community. He raises money for the school system and is kind to kids and dogs. If he weren't already married and thirty years younger than I am, I'd be standing in line! — *Eileen Andrade*

BEST CHILDREN'S STORE

Toy Safari, Alameda

I love TOOOOYYYYSSSSSS. — *supergirl*

HappyHound.com

There's nothing quite so stressful for a dog owner than the prospect of leaving a canine companion in someone else's hands when work or vacation calls for a trip out of town. That makes Happy Hound Play and Daycare — which offers short and long-term dog boarding, grooming, training, and walking services — something of a godsend. Staffed by a set of doting dog lovers, the West Oakland facility is a wonderful and safe place to leave your pooch as that you can actually enjoy your time apart. And the nice are your dog won't even notice you're gone. She'll be too busy socializing with all the other dogs (which are housed in different play areas according to their size) and getting pampered and walked. And if you're still suffering from separation anxiety you can log onto Happy Hound's website where you can watch your dog play on a live webcam. Don't be surprised if your dog falls asleep with a satisfied grin on the car ride home.

BEST LOCAL CHEESES

Sacred Wheel Cheese Shop

4935 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, 510-653-1353, SacredWheelCheeseShop.com

You can buy cheese anywhere, from the aisles of the nearest supermarket to a bevy of specialty shops, scattered like crumbles of blue cheese from one end of the East Bay to the other. You can find it at farmers' markets delis, and corner stores — and most of it may even be decent. But what if what you're looking for is locally produced artisanal cheeses to pair with your Northern California wines, urban-farmed fruits, and fresh-baked bread? In that case, you'll want to visit Temescal's Sacred Wheel Cheese Shop, where most of the cheeses were made on small California farms by purveyors like Cypress Grove Chevre, Central Coast Creamery and Point Reyes Cheese Company. While you're there, pick up some locally made spreads and other accouterments. Sacred Wheel stocks plenty. And provided you're the least bit hungry don't leave before trying a grilled-cheese-and-tomato-soup combo. The Pabst Blue Ribbon beer mixed into the latter isn't local but how far is Milwaukee, really?

MOST REVOLUTIONARILY NICE SERVICE AT A MEGACHAIN

Bed Bath & Beyond

560 2nd St., Oakland, 510-834-9484 BedBathandBeyond.com

Let's say completely hypothetically speaking, that you're only a blender from Bed Bath & Beyond. You buy the cheapest, least expensive, one because you're a cheap and irresponsible person. Then let's say that during the (hypothetical) ill-fated Margarita Project of September 2011 your well-meaning but ultimately already very margarita-ed roommate thinks as a good idea to stick a knife in there while the blades are moving in order to dislodge a particularly pesky piece of ice, causing the entire thing to make an awful kind of moaning noise and stop working. Then, hypothetically you go on to explain what happened and buy a new one, and they give you a completely new blender, no questions asked and free of charge. As an apparent matter of company policy, despite the fact that this was manifestly your fault. Better yet they treat everyone like this, all the time — with zero judgment or condescension never pushily but always helpful. Obviously your only way to repay them for this above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty act of kindness then would be to sing their praises in your newspaper's annual Best Of edition. Hypothetically.

MOST COMMUNITY MINDED SEX SHOP

Feelmore510

1703 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-681-0199 Feelmore510.com

Sure, Feelmore's got all your average (and not-so-average) adult needs on lock. But as the motto "it's more than just sex" indicates, Feelmore's owner — adult filmmaker and educator and tech-world refugee Nenna Joiner — has taken it upon herself to create something



Most @ ounce taking t w ill n t r a w e popuphood! Courtesy

that a much more than your standard issue sex shop. That means hosting regular educational and social events; supporting the local arts and sexual health communities through various partnerships; stocking queer- trans and feminist friendly toys, films, and literature; making a concerted effort to target people of color (a demographic long overlooked in the adult industry)- and, most importantly by being positive, supportive, honest and open about the East Bay's collective sex life. Even the shop's physical space reflects that. It's in the middle of the thriving Uptown district for one, surrounded by bars, and instead of opting for the shamefully papered up windows of so many other adult stores, it's got classy window displays, late hours, and perpetually open doors. This is a sex shop that's proudly in and of the community, rather than hiding itself from it. And that's revolutionary.

MOST GROUNDBREAKING RETAIL INITIATIVE

popuphood

9th St., between Broadway and Washington St., Oakland, Popuphood.com

Even when the economy isn't in the crapper, a big challenge for any fledgling retail operation is building up a customer base substantial enough to justify its overhead — and maybe even turn a profit. Popuphood, a small business initiative hatched last year by Tamarinda co-owner Alfonso Dominguez and fellow entrepreneur Sarah Filley, overcame that obstacle by negotiating six months of free rent with the owners of five previously vacant Old Oakland storefronts. The result was the nearly overnight transformation of 9th and Washington streets into a modest retail corridor composed of shops selling everything from designer bicycles to vintage clothing. May marked the end of the first round of retailers' free rent and though the owners of Manifesto Bicycles decided to close their popuphood shop to focus on their original Temescal location they say the rent waiver made it a worthy experiment — and a new boutique, McMullen, has already taken its place. In the rat race of the retail world, popuphood has proved itself a pretty win-win operation.

BEST FASHION OUTSIDER

Ali Golden

470E 49th St., Oakland, 805 340-7086 AliGolden.com

While most designers seem to flood out of the Bay Area for places like Los Angeles and New York Ali Golden proves you can build a successful clothing line in the East Bay. From her Temescal Alley workshop Golden has been designing expertly tailored sheer pieces, which will be available for the first time at local boutiques such as McMullen and Hawthorn come August. For her Fall 2012 collection, the designer embarked on her first foray into larger-scale production as well as experimented with new silhouettes and colors. Expanding on her well-loved sheer maxi dresses and finely tailored tops, Golden played around with back-baring cutouts and bright pops of pink and coral. And despite expanding production, Golden can still frequently be found in her studio and workspace, where she carries one-off samples and experiments in synthetics for seriously slashed prices. Head there now for a peek at Spring 2013, which features iterations on primary colors washed silk and big pleats. But, like always, the emphasis is on crafting sheer pieces that can be customized depending on the wearer. Golden's separate basics transform when thrown over a vintage slip or layered beneath one of her cropped-sleeve kimono coats.

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Readers Say the Darndest Things

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While banks robbed people and failed, credit unions just kept quietly serving their communities. — *Matt Nichols*

BEST GROCERY STORE

Piedmont Grocery

If you ever feel down on yourself and you're a lady, go to the butcher shop. They will make you feel better in a heartbeat. — *tempest40*

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Great vinyl, what else is there to say? — *bells & whistles*

Amoeba

One of the few left. — *Nance Conover*

Dave's Record Shop

Much smaller than its competitors in Berkeley, but packed with gems of records. — *Lucas Brandt*

BEST WINE SHOP

Orinda

Fun interesting. Always a good buy here. Owner is easy and fun to talk to, he writes all his own descriptions and will happily engage in conversation with you at whatever level of wine appreciation/vocabulary/interest you have. It's all about the wine here. That's all. — *Seene Hawley*

BEST COMPANY TO WORK FOR

Wells Customs Service

Free movies! — *kjbluffy*

Forever 21)? Make sure they're one-of-a-kind. Laura Pruland laser-cuts her earrings, necklaces, and pins out of recycled books, making her designs that are whimsical, unique, and remarkably — how to put this delicately? — unsalvaged looking. Think colorful geometric drop earrings, intricate initial pendants cut from book covers; pins that are made to look like robots or cameras and are 100-percent sure to prompt compliments; and where-did-you-get-them. Plus all the books she uses are falling apart, old, or otherwise unwanted, meaning that this stuff isn't just cute — it's veritably green

BEST BOUTIQUE

Viv & Ingrid at Oxford Hall

2142 Oxford St., Berkeley 510-524-8082, VivandIngrid.com

For more than a decade, Viv & Ingrid has designed simple yet gorgeous jewelry from the East Bay and its signature beaded hoop earrings have graced the ears of celebrities and locals alike. Last year, the designers — Vivian Wang and Ingrid Chen, both UC Berkeley grads — opened their first retail store, situated conveniently in Berkeley's downtown. In addition to its jewelry (which is manufactured on-site) Viv & Ingrid at Oxford Hall also offers accessories and gifts for those with delicate taste, such as vintage letterpress cards, tote bags, handmade Saigua soaps, Maison Bouche chocolates, and Royal Apothe perfumes. It's like taking a tour of your great aunt's house — that is, if your great aunt had exquisite taste.

BEST PLANT NURSERY

East Bay Nursery

2332 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-6490, EastBayNursery.com

Centrally located in West Berkeley this neighborhood staple chose its name right. It is in many ways the quintessential East Bay nursery. It's got edibles for the ever-growing ranks of backyard farmers. It's got California natives and drought-tolerant varieties for water-wise bay-friendly landscaping. It's got groundcovers and succulents and grasses for all applications. It's got trees and shrubs in every shape, size, and color. And what the East Bay Nursery lacks in depth for some specialty plants like bamboo and cacti, it enthusiastically makes up for in sheer nearly overwhelming breadth. An admission free botanical garden, really. Simply browsing is wholly satisfying. When it comes time to shop to find the perfect shade fern or flowering native or hardy succulent, knowledgeable staffers are rarely far away. If you mind my paying a bit more here than you would at a big-box store, it's for better, happier plants and expert service, worth it every time.

BEST GREEN BUSINESS

Sungevity

66 Franklin St., #310, Oakland 510-496-5500, Sungevity.com

The environmental case for rooftop solar is almost unassailable: It's zero-emission, low-impact, locally generated power that doesn't kill birds or tortoises or eat up land. Installation provides jobs and keeps money within communities. As far as clean-energy solutions go, it's perhaps the least contentious. But there's a catch, and it's been a thorn in the solar industry's side for decades: the steep up-front cost of installing a new system. Returns on investment and savings down the line don't mean much when you lack the cash to get there. Sungevity is one of many players in the field to energize this, but its forward-looking solar lease — little or no money down, free installation, and often a reduced energy bill from day one — doesn't just sidestep this roadblock; it obliterates it. The five-year-old Oakland company is rapidly expanding in the United States and around the world, all on the back of one good idea serving another.

BEST URBAN FARMLAND SHOP

City Slicker Farms

1625 14th St., Oakland, 510-763-4241 CitySlickerFarms.org

If you live in West Oakland and want to start an urban garden, there's only one way to begin: call City Slicker Farms. At the very least, they'll hook you up with expert advice on what to grow and how — and when to be wary of contaminated topsoils. But where City Slicker Farms really shines is its full-service backyard garden program for low-income residents. Free

@ Berkeley Public Library

Free Counseling for Landlords and Tenants with the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board

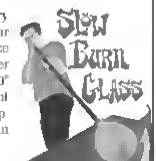
Every 3rd Saturday of the month
11:00a.m.-12:00p.m
Central Library, Berkeley History Room, 2nd fl
2090 Kittredge St. in Downtown Berkeley

For more information (510) 981-5100 www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org

Slow Burn Glass
Presents
Glass Classes
An Experience with Hot Glass



Have you ever wanted to try glass blowing? This is your chance with no experience necessary! Learn to gather molten glass from a 2100° furnace, color and form it into a paperweight, cup, vase or anything you can come up with!





E iWEAR.net

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Fourth Street Berkeley California





of charge to qualifying households, the program employs experienced gardeners and young volunteers to outfit homes with mulch mixed beds, trellises, soil, fruit trees — everything a prospective gardener needs to get started. Then the partner participants with a mentor to ensure two years of fruitful farming. Many have gone on to launch urban farms or businesses of their own — or simply got their neighbors growing, too — resulting in an urban farming network that has helped place Oakland on the vanguard of a national movement.

BEST NEW ILLO IDEA

Institute of Urban Homesteading

IUHOakland.com

Oakland's institute of Urban Homesteading represents one of many earnest efforts within the Bay Area and nationwide to make something new out of a very old idea. It also happens to be one of the best. As with urban farming, which is but a piece of the bigger "urban homesteading" pie, the concept boils down to this: Taking something humans have done to survive since the dawn of civilization, and spin it for contemporary city living, in today's world, the approach reaches beyond its pragmatic roots to a more spiritual, even existential purpose. That's because in a society modulated by high tech devices, cluttered with mass-produced goods and fueled by cheap foods making your own stuff is an act of rebellion. Through classes on gardening and animal husbandry — foraging and food preservation and more, the Institute of Urban Homesteading helps to bring concepts of self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability, out of the past and into the mainstream, beginning here in the East Bay.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY FUEL STATION

BioFuel Oasis

1441 Ashby Ave., Berkeley, 510-665-5889, BioFuelOasis.com

Doing one thing well is good. Doing a bunch of things well is great. Doing them as a women-/worker-owned cooperative is remarkable. And doing them with a steadfast loyalty to sustainability, localism and community is, well, pretty Berkeley. BioFuel Oasis doesn't just sell biofuel for $4.79 a gallon. That's how it started back in 2003, but today the operation has expanded to include an urban farm and homesteading store offering such necessities as chicken feed, straw bales, baby chicks, beekeeping supplies, composting worms and canings, fertilizers, and mason jars for canning. And in case you don't know what to do with such things, BioFuel Oasis also offers a wide variety of how-to classes. Among them: Fermentation 101, Backyard Beekeeping, and Urban Goats 101, taught by Novella Carpenter. Oakland's patron saint of urban farming. The deeper you dig, the more you find.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY BIKE SHOP

Bikes 4 Life

1600 7th St., Oakland, 510-452-2453, Bikes4Life.com

The East Bay has no shortage of bike shops that go the extra mile to provide job-training opportunities to local youth, advocate for bicycle infrastructure, offer classes and

Categories We Didn't Think Of

BEST AFFORDABLE ACUPUNCTURE
Berkeley Community Acupuncture Clinic
— Lauren Kaneko-Jones

BEST DOG WALKING/PET-SITTING SERVICE
Walk On, Pup!
An "amazing group of dog whisperers that take a credible care of my dog when I need someone to watch her! When I'm at work I can check my Instagram or Facebook and check out pictures of my buddy on walks or participating in play time! She always comes home happy and pooped out!" *— Bianca Perrilan*

BEST LACTATION CONSULTANT
Amrit K Khalsa RN, IBCLC
Her over forty years experience in the lactation profession will assist you with "All the help you need in order begin a successful journey with breastfeeding." *— Amrit K Khalsa*

BEST CSA (CONSUMER SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE)
Golden Gate Organics
— Rebecca Winfield

BEST PLACE TO FIND OUT WHAT TO DO AND WHERE TO GO IN OAKLAND
FUELMAKE DIO
— Corina Vino

BEST WINDOW DISPLAYS
Mercy Vintage
Changes it up frequently, always creative. *— Jim Smith*

BEST GIFT SHOP
Bells & Whistles in the Uptown District
Bells & Whistles is home to over forty Oakland and greater Bay Area artisans. Not just a "local shop" but a local shop that carries mostly locally made goods. The real deal. *— bells & whistles*

BEST BOOKSTORE CAT(S)
Port and Dawn at Pegasus Books Downtown
— Julia Sheng

BEST AIRPLANE IDENTIFICATION GUIDE
Plane Spotter
An East Bay business. *— Caryn Wolf*

BEST PLACE TO FIND YOUR STOLEN BIKE
Karin Cyclo
Though the Ashby flea market is a close second. *— Gopal Dayaneni*

BEST T SHIRT DESIGNS
Manifesto Bicycles
Their T-shirt designs lack ass. *— Jim Smith*

education, or otherwise pair retail and repair with a dose of activism. Even within this crowd, there's something that sets West Oakland's Bikes 4 Life apart. The shop opened its doors in 2009 as an outgrowth of its popular annual Fence Ride — not the East Bay's biggest group ride, but likely the most diverse. That's an small point of pride for the shop's founder and manager Tony Coleman, who uses Bikes 4 Life to build community in West Oakland and to empower underserved young people who possess few constructive outlets. The bikes themselves — ranging as they often do among upscale bicyclist and bike-racing shops — are merely tools, a means to an end. That shift in perspective makes all the difference.



Host farmers market stand Guru Ram Das Orchards

Chris Duffy

BEST FARMERS' MARKET

Jack London Square

Sundays, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Webster and Water sts., Oakland, JackLondonSquare.com/events/farmersmarket.html

Sure Grand Lake's got the high profile and the son of vendors (and Berkeley's got the possibility of a Michael Pollan sighting), but when it comes to farmers' markets nod everything else, it's not the size that matters; it's how you use it. And at Jack London that means a wide but well-chosen selection of produce, egg, meat, flower, and hot-food vendors, stretched along the Jack London waterfront amid a remarkably well-behaved and mercifully tourist-free crowd, all set against the backdrop of what's by far the most stunning setting of any farmers' market in the Bay Area, save for maybe the ferry building. If you're smart, you'll buy some goat milk ice cream or some African food or some spring rolls from one of the stands, spread out on one of the many lawn or grassy little knolls, and watch the boats come in and out of the marina. You'll have no choice but to thank your good fortune.

BEST FARMERS' MARKET STAND

Guru Ram Das Orchards

South Berkeley (Tuesday) and Downtown Berkeley (Saturday) Farmers' Markets, 530-787 3864

If growing fruit were a beauty contest, Guru Ram Das Orchards wouldn't be a prime contender. The fruits that owner Dalar Singh Khalsa sells at the Berkeley Tuesday and Saturday farmers' markets aren't the biggest or most attractive; you'll ever find. His delicate Royal Blenheim apricots, for instance, are small and speckled and a little bit green — not pretty by any stretch. But they're some of the juiciest, most fragrant apricots you'll ever taste. Likewise Guru Ram Das's small-ish, slightly misshapen Valencia oranges taste like oranges ought to taste: even if they are poor candidates for still-life painting, Khalsa's also the only vendor we know of who sells hachiya persimmons like they're meant to be eaten, fully ripe, black-spotted and practically melting into a pool of super-sweet jelly. The stand really only consists of one small table — two or three items at a time — but from season to season the quality is always top-notch.

MOST COMMUNITY MINDED BREWERY

Bison Brewing Company

Available at various locations, BisonBrew.com

"Organic" may not mean much anymore, but commitment — to the environment, to the product, to the community — still does, and Berkeley's Bison Brewing has all three in spades. It's one of the few certified-organic breweries in the country — a decision, according to owner Dan Del Grande, equal parts hop-head and tree-hugger that was prompted out of "wanting my professional life to intersect better with my personal values," and that contributes to cleaner rivers, more sustainable soil practices, healthier farmworkers and a host of other green goodnesses. But it's also one of the rare businesses that adopts the sustainable ethos even when its inconvenient (like when the price of organic hops vastly outstrips that of conventional ones) and in every fiber of its corporate being (it brews using green energy whenever possible, employs 100-percent recycled paper in its six packs, and even has its own carbon-offset club for customers). Best of all: The beer's just as good as — and often better than — the other stuff.

BEST ENGINEER INVENTED ANTIDOTE TO DIRT

Montclair Soaps

Alternating Saturdays at the Grand Lake Farmers' Market, MontclairSoaps.com

Folks with allergies to soaps and lotions are often out of luck when looking for great smelling soaps that don't cause them to immediately break out in a rash. Oaklander Kim Emanuel's love of allergy free soaps originated from a desire to help his own allergic wife, to true revolutionary style, Emanuel saw a need in the market and used his existing skill set to fill the gap creating an exotic line of lotions, soaps, and creams. Using his extensive background in engineering, he dove into his home garage lab to concoct an alternative to the bland scent-free soaps most allergy sufferers encounter, combining fruit and oat oils and essences to create the perfect bar. The impulse is to order a year's supply so that one never runs out the soft feel of these subtly scented bars (lime-cedar, tangerine, jasmine) sliding across the skin in a rich lather. All soaps are made in Emanuel's West Oakland warehouse and retail online and in Bay Area spas, shops, and at the Grand Lake farmers' market.

BEST RESOURCE FOR HOMEBREWERS

Oak Barrel Winecraft

1443 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-849-9400, OakBarrel.com

Any area with world-class brew culture needs a world-class brew shop. Behold Oak Barrel Winecraft, which has been giving amateur wine- and beer-makers their very own Willy Wonka moments for some fifty-plus years. Within this well stocked and well-organized shop you'll find all manner of hops malts, grapes yeasts extracts additives tanks, presses, fermenters, flavorings, cultures, crushers, corks, barrels, bottles and just about anything and everything else you may need to begin or continue getting your DIY drunk on no matter how obscure. Bonuses: The staff is always willing to answer questions and check recipes, and there's usually beer on tap.

MOST GREEN DISPENSARY

Harborside Health Center

1840 Embarcadero, Oakland, 510-533-0146, HarborsideHealthCenter.com

Outdoor-grown marijuana may consume as much as 1 percent of all electricity generated in the United States, according to some expert estimates. That's an absurd amount of energy waste for what was once a solar-powered plant. Oakland's Harborside Health Center — the largest dispensary in the world — is helping the marijuana industry get greener by reversing the dominance of indoor-grown marijuana with its "Sungrown" program which pushes outdoor pot based on price, high potency and a great aroma. Since outdoor has a reputation for being less potent than indoor, Harborside uses a revolutionary new rapid potency estimator to quickly identify and buy the strongest batches it can find. Outdoor is much cheaper to produce than indoor due to energy savings, and Harborside passes on those savings to customers. The results speak for themselves. Sungrown sales have exploded, helping Harborside seed pot culture's revolutionary return to weed the way Mother Nature grew it.

BEST MEDICAL CANNABIS DELIVERY SERVICE

Hills Farmacy

HillsFarmacy.com

Who among us laments the drug war's end among people rich enough to purchase peace wholesale? Hills Farmacy. Since February the East Bay nonprofit medical marijuana collective has served some of the most rare, most expertly grown medicinal cannabis to places like Walnut Creek, Moraga and Piedmont as well as Oakland and Berkeley. Appropriately based in the tony East Bay hills, Hills has some *cojones* retailing nighth-ounces for $80 a bag. That's almost double medical market prices. But when *High Times* tallied the judges scores for highest CBD and best edible categories in the 2012 Bay Area Cannabis Cup, this past June Hills Farmacy took home two coveted prestigious trophies, one for its MCU ATF Bubble Hash very high in the anti-inflammatory cannabidiol and another for its Eleve gourmet truffles. Cannabis this classy doesn't come cheap.

BEST MEDICAL MARIJUANA CLINIC

NorCal Health Care

1801 Broadway, Oakland, 510-839-0923, NorCalHealthCareMD.com

Legal with a doctor's note since 1996 medical cannabis has been proven to relieve symptoms associated with anxiety, arthritis, HIV/AIDS, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, depression, chronic pain, multiple sclerosis, nausea, migraines, fibromyalgia, anorexia, IBS, PMS — the list goes on and on. Yet patients report many primary physicians still know little about the drug. Even fewer write recommendations for it. So medical marijuana specialists fill the gap. While quality of care varies widely, NorCal Health Care charges reasonable prices for recommendations based on an adequate standard of care. While nothing fancy, the large urban clinic is well known which is good because many dispensaries were taken dodge-looking doctor's notes. NorCal also offers general medicine prescriptions, acupuncture and massage therapy. With a great location at Broadway and 19th Street, it's the people's weed clinic.

BEST NEAR-ESS CANNABIS SCIENTISTS

Steep Hill Lab

SteepHillLab.com

Started in 2008, Steep Hill Lab of Oakland has continually pushed a revolution in medical pot. It was the first to test for cannabis' Health Centers need for safety and potency, and it fomented a cannabis lab boom that continues to this day. Patients can now choose how strong a medicine they want, and Steep Hill helped create the market for more medicinal cannabidiol-rich pot — a distinctly non-psychoactive weed compared to the street stuff. Now the lab has released QuantuCann, a near-infrared sensor setup for clubs and growers. QuantaCann can estimate a cannabis sample's

potency in three minutes instead of three to five days. Steep Hill's rapid potency testing changes the parameters of the weed enterprise, from seed to smoke. For scientific innovations in the face of a federal crackdown Steep Hill Labs earns our award for the East Bay's Most Fearless Cannabis Scientists.

BEST CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Bhang Chocolate

BhangChocolate.com

From milk chocolate to dark chocolate and triple-strength cookies and cream, Bhang Chocolate's deep line of professional medicated edibles is award-worthy in more ways than one. This spring, Bhang won first place in the Los Angeles *High Times* Cannabis Cup's edibles category. But Bhang also deserves recognition for its quality product, pristine workspace and unwavering management amid an industry in turmoil. The small Oakland kitchen has served the greater Bay Area since 2010 and it exemplifies what appropriate packaging should be in commercial medical cannabis. That means a professionally made chocolate bar with a wrapper that includes dosage information, usage instructions, ingredient list, nutritional information, allergens, and the lab it was tested at. Of course, it doesn't hurt that Bhang's chocolate is the bomb.

BEST SMOKE SHOP

Big Al's Smoke Shop

2302 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-540-0764

Berkeley has declared itself a safe haven for medical marijuana patients and even responsible adult users, and Big Al's Smoke Shop on Telegraph Avenue represents the best smoke shop in the mighty college town. Weed paraphernalia has graduated beyond the color-changing pipes sold at Dead shows. Big Al's has those, and about fifty of the biggest brand names in international designer glassware, like ROOR, Tura, Illadelph, JHD, Lux, and Zong. Big Al's is also keeping pace with the concentrates craze, offering rails, globes, skillets, and other accoutrements, not to mention "concentrators" by Sheldon Black. Big Al's keeps a pretty low profile though. It doesn't have a web page, and offers barely any new information online. To compensate, the staff does its best to get to know regulars and anticipate their needs. Big Al's carries a wide selection, from $4 packs of pipe cleaners to the $500 PHX with a honeycomb diffuser percolator and splash guard.



Best white ground chocolate shop: Barlovento Chocolates. Chris Laffey

BEST [illegible] AND CHOCOLATE

Barlovento Chocolates

638 2nd St., Oakland, 510-238-8787

BarioventoChocolates.com

"Underground" doesn't even cover it. From the outside, Barlovento is almost impossible to find: no signage, no windows, no indication whatsoever that this is any different from the private warehouses that line this tree-shaded street in an industrial neighborhood — even the doors are locked. This is the home of place you'll walk past two or three or four times — double-checking the address on your phone, wondering if you're on the right street, very nearly giving up altogether — before, finally taking that leap of faith and ringing the bell. When you're finally let inside — likely by owner Peter Ryalen himself, apron caked with cocoa powder, hairnet on head — the space is dark and tiny, thick with the smell of melting chocolate and cluttered with boxes. If "underground" is an understatement, "chocolate shop" is an overstatement — it's more like a chocolate factory that happens to have a display case (according to employees, the average number of walk-in customers hovers around two a day). But holy hell, what a display it is: exquisitely detailed, densely textured, ambitiously well made truffles in flavors like chile de arbol y apricot, cardamom and honey and cabernet, all handmade from high-quality mostly local ingredients, many of which are culled from small farms (the chocolate is single-source Venezuelan). Barlovento Chocolates are available at the Grand Lake farmers' market, the Fourth Street Pasta Shop, and various other locations, but truth be told, the brick-and-mortar might be most fun.







PEOPLE & PLACES

REVOLUTION 2012



Bust revolutionary spirit guides: Shamanic Cheerleaders. Chris Duffey

MOST REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVIST JOURNALIST

The Occupy Livestreamers

Never before has the line between activist and journalist been so blurred — but then again never has there been a movement quite like Occupy. This was, after all, the first large-scale social movement that came with the social web, the 24 hour news cycle and the ability to transmit images and ideas cheaply, easily and practically instantly around the world. In Oakland, a small group of people — some with activism or journalism backgrounds, a few with both, many with neither — managed to harness this power — and responsibility — in a way that had deep impacts not just for the Ogawa encampment and local activists, but, indeed, for Oakland at large and the Occupy Wall Street movement as a whole. They were there when Scott Olsen was hit and when the Port was shut down and when the entire city felt like it was about to explode; when the entire thing started and long after the mainstream media left. When livestreaming meant a significant sacrifice of money, time, sanity and all too often, physical safety. They were out in the streets and then, increasingly, they were in City Hall chambers, offering their own records of what happened at critical junctures — records that often felt more reliable than the city's and the Oakland Police Department's. They showed people as close as City Hall and as far away as Cairo what was happening in Oakland, unedited and in real time. And they did all this largely for free, with little recognition, all in the name of a simple but potent political philosophy: That sunshine really is the best disinfectant, and that the truth is the most powerful tool any activist has.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT GUIDES

Shamanic Cheerleaders

ShamanicCheerleaders.com

Cheerleading has gotten a bad rap, flush as it is with stuck up popular girls. But cheer can be so much more, as evidenced by the Shamanic Cheerleaders, a performance group of women who sing and dance their audiences into deeper awareness. Their credo? "If you want to be enlightened, you've got to lighten up." The crew includes artistic director and squad captain Satori (as well as (among others) Alexistential BadBiiCheetah Crescendo Devsalicious Heartemis Oceanna Ray 2 and Shamamma. The girls offer a few packages. One consists of three different ten minute stage performances interspersed at your event; the other a forty-minute show. Not only will they rock the stage with their shamanic cheers, they'll also perform "cheer-tan," raps and rants combatives, even hula hooping. "We're a comedy act — we're spiritual and satirical," Satori said. "We're here to make you laugh."

MOST REVOLUTIONARY BREWMASTER

Kevin Christensen

Like most wonderful things in this world —

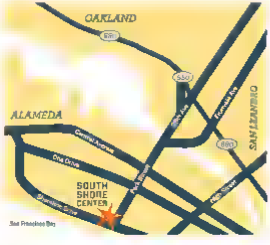
smoking, fast food, unprotected sex the cursory —beer's got something of a sinister undertone. Namely: It's not a very environmentally friendly or socially responsible industry, at least in the mainstream — and malt, one of its key ingredients, is produced and distributed almost entirely by big agribusinesses, of the rainforest destroying, union-busting, International Labor Rights Fund-getting sued-by variety. Even in the progressive Bay Area, where we harvest our own honey and interrogate our waiters about sourcing, that part of the process is largely ignored, or at the very least viewed as a necessary evil. Not so for Kevin Christensen, an Oakland based labor organizer and amateur brewmaster who's currently hard at work reimagining the way the malt supply functions — and in the process, how beer industry at large operates — by joining forces with local farmers and breweries to create a micro-malting and brewing company, still in its nascent stages but very much in the works. Now that's something to drink to.

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510 303 8823
PedalBeach.com | Facebook.com/PedalBeach
ALAMEDASOUTHSHORECENTER.COM



Readers Poll Winners

BEST COMMUNITY GARDEN
Spiral Gardens Community Food Security Project

BEST K-12 TEACHER
Russell Wright, Walden School

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD
Temescal

BEST NONPROFIT OR CHARITY
LifeLong Medical Center

BEST PICK UP SPOT
Lake Merritt

BEST PLACE TO HANG OUT
Lake Merritt

BEST PLACE TO HOLD A REVOLUTION
Oscar Grant/ Frank Ogawa Plaza

BEST PLACE TO LEARN DIY SKILLS
The Crucible

BEST PLACE TO SMOKE WEED
At Home

BEST PLACE TO TAKE THE KIDS
Tilden Park

BEST POLITICAL MOVEMENT OR GROUP
Occupy Oakland

BEST PROGRAM TO ENGAGE YOUTH
Sarah's Science Camps

BEST PROTEST EVENT
Nov. 2 General Strike and Mass Day of Action

BEST RELIGIOUS SERVICE
East Bay Church of Religious Science

BEST USE OF PUBLIC SPACE
Occupy Oakland

MOST COURAGEOUS ATTORNEY
John Burris

MOST GROUNDBREAKING IDEA
Lolo Health Center

MOST OUTSPOKEN ACTIVIST
Boots Riley

MOST OUTSPOKEN PROFESSOR
Robert Reich

MOST REVOLUTIONARY CITY OR CITY INITIATIVE
Oakland

MOST UNWAVERING POLITICIAN OR POLITICAL FIGURE
Barbara Lee

MOST OUTSPOKEN PROFESSOR

Robert Reich

Former Labor Secretary under President Bill Clinton and now professor at UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy Robert Reich has been documenting the growing economic disparity between the super wealthy and the rest of us some long before the words "Occupy" and "movement" became linked. In books, on television and the radio, and at public lectures, Reich makes a convincing case that the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few poses a real threat to our democracy. Reich — whose name ironically means "rich" in German — decries the influence of corporate money in politics, noting that he'll never run with the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Citizens United* case that corporations are people, "when Texas executes a corporation." He may be small — he stands less than five feet tall — but with his experience at the highest levels of government, his media savvy, his eloquence, and his passion, Reich's stature as a voice for social change has no equal in the East Bay.

MOST COURAGEOUS SCHOOL OFFICIAL

Tony Smith

Most school superintendents purposely shy away from controversy. Not Tony Smith, superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District. Since taking over the troubled school system three years ago, Smith not only has righted the district's financial ship, but has taken on some sacred cows in the process. Smith realized a couple years ago that the cash strapped district could not afford to have the same number of schools that it did back in 2000 when its enrollment was 40 percent higher. So he grabbed the electric third rail of education politics and pushed through a controversial plan to close schools that the district could no longer afford to operate. Then earlier this year, he recommended that the school board shutter the highest performing charter school in the city — American Indian Charter School II. Why? Because the school appears to be running a fraud that includes rigged test scores, the misuse of public funds, and the mistreatment of students. Unfortunately, fewer less than courageous school board members, led by Noel Gallo and Alice Spearman, voted to ignore Smith's advice.

MOST WATCHFUL CITY WATCHDOG

Jim Chanin

The Oakland Police Department has been plagued by officer misconduct for decades. OPD has a particularly deplorable record for shooting unarmed suspects, especially young men of color. Two East Bay attorneys, however, have committed themselves over the years to holding the department accountable — John Burris of Oakland and Jim Chanin of Berkeley. Burris, a media darling, has received much attention, but Chanin's work should not be overlooked. Him's no fire-breathing liberal, either. Him's reasonable, thoughtful and tough. For example, him's repeatedly tried to get OPD to adopt the best practices of other police departments and has endorsed the work of independent monitors — all retired cops — who have been keeping close tabs on Oakland police. Unfortunately, OPD brass and the police union have resisted the court-ordered reforms. As a result, OPD may become the first police department in the nation to end up in federal receivership.



Best anti-plastic activist Beth Terry

Stephen Lisenmaier

FEARLESS NIMBY FIGHTER

Doug Herst

Doug Herst an environmentalist and longtime Berkeley businessman, wants to build an artists colony in West Berkeley The ultra-green development would feature 320 units of workforce housing, including about 50 affordable units for artists, next to green-tech businesses, light industrial companies, and artist studios Known as Peerless Greens, named after Herst s former company Peerless Lighting, the community would also feature artisan shops, an urban garden, vertical gardens and rooftop solar panels. Sounds fabulous, right ? Not if you're one of Berkeley's infamous NIMBYs, who have been fighting Herst every step of the way They adamantly oppose dense housing in West Berkeley even though environmentalists agree that one of the best ways to fight climate change is to spur urban growth and curb suburban sprawl But despite the fierce opposition, Herst, an art lover who is also on the board of Seacology n Berkeley-based environmental group that works to protect marine areas around the world, is not giving up.

THE POLITICIANS WHO BEST STOOD UP FOR THE LITTLE GUY

Nancy Skinner and Loni Hancock

Over the past decade, Amazon.com has become a retailing monster The online goliath put untold numbers of small independent stores out of business with the help of politicians who repeatedly refused to force the retailer to charge sales taxes like brick-and-mortar businesses must do The unfair competitive advantage fueled Amazon s rapid growth and its political muscle. But then it found itself up against Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner and state Senator Loni Hancock, both of Berkeley Skinner co-authored legislation to close Amazon.s sales-tax loophole And then after Governor Jerry Brown signed Skinner.s bill, Hancock wrote legislation to block Amazon from putting the issue on the ballot. Hancock knew that Amazon was prepared to spend unlimited sums to overturn Skinner's legislation, so she enlisted the help of big-box retailers who weren't happy with Amazon s sales-tax exemption either Last September, Amazon finally buckled and this fall the retailing behemoth will for the first time, start charging sales tax on purchases made by Californians, thereby reducing the company's ability to undercut mom-and-pop stores.

BEST ANTI-PLASTIC ACTIVIST

Beth Terry

MyPlasticFreeLife.com

She finds plastic in the unlikeliest of places. ice-cream cartons, chewing gum, synthetic wine necks Then there are the more obvious, inclusive-to-avoid sources: toothbrushes, paper-bowel wrappers, cheese packaging. Through a miracle of ingenuity and patience, Oakland resident Beth Terry eschews just about all of them (in 2011 she discarded only 2.1 pounds of plastic) But her aim is not to set a superhuman standard; instead, it's to inspire others to think



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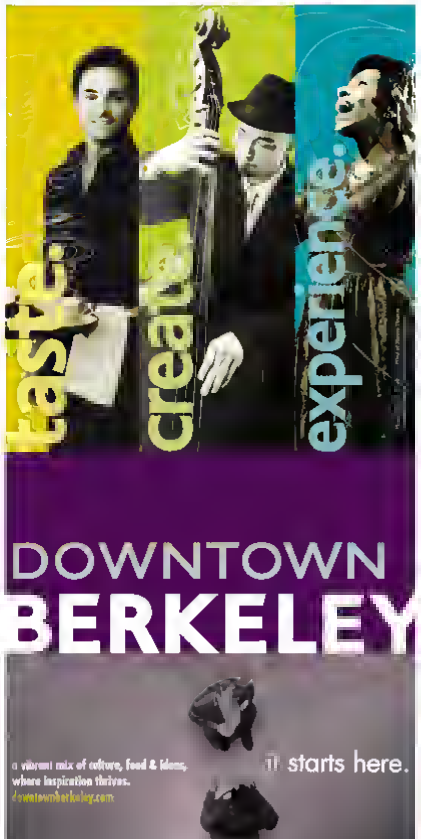
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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST COMMUNITY GARDEN

Occupy the Farm

Sparking an urban land reform movement, from the East Bay — that is the meaning of revolution. — *Gopal Dayaneni*

BEST K-12 TEACHER

Rebecca Young

How does she do it? Not only does she deeply know and respect each child in her class, her teaching style is continuously being adapted to meet the individual needs of her children. A million thanks. — *Sonje Cabaun*

BEST NONPROFIT OR CHARITY

Alameda County Community Food Bank

Handles and distributes huge volumes of fresh and packaged food (quickly) and efficiently. Their staff treats volunteers with respect and gratitude so that we return week after week feeling we are doing important work on flexible schedules getting exercise and doing so among friends. — *Lloyd Lowinguetto*

East Bay Bicycle Coalition

They've done more than any other group in the East Bay to shift transit policy — and therefore quality of life — over the last forty years. Bicycles on BART? Thank them for that. — *Alden Mudge*

BEST PICK-UP SPOT

Berkeley Bowl

Have you ever tried cooking (fill in the blank)? — *Ana Raz*

Berkeley Poetry Slam

Poets tend to be very slutty. — *Zaira Fargo*

BEST PLACE TO HANG OUT

In front of the house with the neighbors

— *Patrick Freedman*

The Piedmont Cemetery (Mountain View Cemetery)

It may sound morbid but it is beautiful and great hiking and views, and when you are done you can snag a drink at the tiki bar or grab ice cream at Fenton's. And of course one should always pay homage to Mac Dre when visiting. — *David Prosper*

UC Berkeley

On a Sunday, when there are no classes in session, it's a great campus to walk, bike, or nap. — *Tim Ernesto*

BEST PLACE TO HOLD A REVOLUTION

Apparently at work ... oops!

— *Dana Rushenas*

Cuevas Coyarzis Plaza in San Ramon

Occupy missed the boat/tanker/auto on this one. — *Alden Mudge*

In your pants!

— *Arthur Perley*

MOST COURAGEOUS CITY OFFICIAL

Deanna Santana

City administrators and city managers tend to be a timid lot. Few dare to challenge the conduct of a mayor or city councilmember. But Deanna Santana appears to be anything but timid. Just months after being appointed city administrator by Oakland Mayor Jean Quan, Santana launched a probe into the questionable activities of then Vice Mayor Desley Brooks. Santana found evidence that Brooks may have violated the city's separation-of-powers law when she spearheaded the opening of a swanky new teen center in her district, at taxpayers' expense. Brooks, who has a reputation for being a hard-nosed politician didn't like being questioned but Santana refused to back down, and revealed evidence that Brooks had tried to cover her tracks. Eventually a majority of the city council led by Ignacio De La Fuente, Jane Brunner and Larry Reid, swept the entire matter under the rug, but not before the no-nonsense Santana showed that she's keeping close tabs on Oakland's public officials.

BEST ANARCHIST HANGOUT

The Holdout

2313 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, TheHoldout.org

Opened this year The Holdout has already acquired the status of Oakland's premier anarchist hangout and community center. But spend five minutes within its post-industrial-style doors, and you wouldn't even know it. Be it political meetings, reading groups, book swaps, bicycle maintenance workshops, or community parties, there's a liberating element within its community-oriented inner workings that's strikingly different than the stereotype of the whiny, anarchist "outside agitator". A real social center, The Holdout is a space that brings together those interested in rethinking the structure of society and residents in need of getting practical assistance from its ongoing, hands-on workshops. Best of all, it provides an opportunity to mingle with some of Oakland's most interesting community members forging connections with new prospective friends that you wouldn't have met otherwise. No matter the occasion, go to The Holdout and you're sure to get more out of it than you'd ever imagine.

MOST REVOLUTIONARY URBAN DESIGN

Parklets

A pair of San Francisco designers brought the idea to the United States from Europe in late 2005 for an art project and since then parklets have evolved from a stunt into a serious conversation. With the first official PARK(ing) Day the following September, 24 tiny Area parklets helped set the stage for an urban-design revolution that continues to challenge the way many people, including

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST PLACE TO LEARN CITY SKILLS

Laney College

Spend $80 for a grant class that would cost $400 at the Crucible. — *JKelly*

BEST PLACE TO SMOKE WEED

All over Oakland, apparently.

— *jim smith*

Maxwell Park

So chill and full of cute people. And it's near BART and nice and flat so a lazy walk is great. And when you get hungry there are all the food options at Temescal and Piedmont Ave. — *David Prosper*

BEST PLACE TO TAKE THE KIDS

Adventure Playground

What could be more, fun than giving your kids a fun name and then letting them tumble on stuff built by other seven-year olds and then getting on a zip line that has not been maintained in fifteen years ... all sanctioned by the Berkeley Parks!! Love this place!! — *jsimms*

BEST POLITICAL MOVEMENT OR GROUP

Occupy My Face

— *Rob Thompson*

BEST PROGRAM TO ENGAGE YOUTH

Kinetic Arts Center

When it didn't teach them how to juggle and swing on a trapeze. — *Victoria Angelo*

Youth Speaks

With programs in dozens of schools and thousands of kids involved, this truly gives kids a voice. — *Jamie DeWolf*

business owners and city planners. Think about streets, sidewalks, and public spaces. If anything, the movement is just getting going. Early adopters like San Francisco, New York City, and Philadelphia have inspired cities like Long Beach and Oakland (which has approved seven to be installed this summer and fall in a pilot program) to take the idea and run with it. The goal? Convert parking spots to tiny public parks with seating, greenery, and bike racks, enhancing pedestrians' experience of urban streetscapes while beautifying barren blocks and encouraging everyone to stop and smell the roses. The Parklets movement isn't anti-car, but it does provide a wedge into a bigger conversation about designing urban spaces on a human scale.

MOST HOLISTIC APPROACH TO KEEPING THE BAY CLEAN

Bioretention

Landscaping features that serve a single purpose are rather antiquated these days. Instead, the trend among forward-looking landscape architects, developers, and homeowners throughout the East Bay is to design for many purposes. Aesthetics remain a central concern, but so are water retention, attractiveness to pollinators, and other ecological functions. That's why curbside bioswales and other forms of bioretention are such a great idea. Not only do they beautify sidewalks, curbs, and gutters with landscape-quality plantings and play a part in a city's broader ecosystems, but they also filter pollutants from stormwater and runoff before it has a chance to make it to the bay. Within the last couple years, the City of Emeryville has installed attractive, self-watering bioswale landscapes at gutter locations throughout the city, capturing runoff before it flows down the drain, sprucing up neighborhoods with native plants and cleansing street level pollutants at the same time. Talk about a triple bottom line.

BEST OUTDOOR REFUGE

Lake Merritt

Near Bay Pl. and Grand Ave., Oakland

As summer months make us tear away layers of clothing in exchange for copious amounts of sunscreen, there's really no better place to get your essential summer exposure of Vitamin D and alcohol than the Fairyland side of Lake Merritt. Instead of doing that pesky underwater BART commute to Dolores Park, prepare for the liberating experience that is public drinking in the backyard of Oakland. Head out on a warm day and you won't be alone, as the practice of relishing sun with an alcoholic sidekick on the shores near Children's Fairyland has become a regular pastime for everyday Oaklanders. Transcending those shady Prohibitionist-era norms while breaking free of the alienation inherent to life within the confines of our private indoor partitions, you're guaranteed to enjoy one of the most pleasurable of all summertime activities.

BEST COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP

Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative

Nothing brings people together quite like a garden and nothing brings small scale urban farmers together quite like the Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative. Founded in 1995, the collaborative now supports nineteen school yard gardens and eleven neighborhood gardens on public and private land throughout Berkeley by securing funding, serving as a liaison with the city, and facilitating the sharing of resources like compost. Community gardens range in age from 2 to 24 years and serve all corners of the city from leafy North Berkeley to Industrial West Berkeley. And demand for plots remains steep, with multi-year waiting lists exceeding twenty, thirty even forty names. Coordinator Beebo Turman — who got her start in food advocacy helping Alice Waters launch the Edible Schoolyard Project — is on the lookout for more underused lots to convert to future gardens, like the Santa Fe Right-of-Way where enthusiasts have all but given up on the plans for a community orchard.

MOST ACTIVE CONSTITUTIONAL CANNABIS LAWYER

Joe Elford

Arguing forcefully and cogently on behalf of Oakland-based medical marijuana patient lobby group Americans for Safe Access, Chief Counsel Joe Elford does the dirty work,







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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST PROTEST EVENT

Occupy my month and not be an asshole
— *eastbayrascal*

Original Occupy Port Shutdown
Epically beautiful action before the anarcho-hipster-punks ruined everything.
— *Malia Cohen Rosenthal*

Tied one, gay at Starbucks and Carter who talks about queer issues and Libya
— *Edward Decker*

BEST USE OF PUBLIC SPACE

Kalimba Kelly's evening beards
Brilliant! — *Tom Hohb*

Great Wall of Oakland
Technically not public but I really admire Chez Cotise for letting artists use it (and good Project Bandaloop!) — *Tim Frenero*

MOST COURAGEOUS ATTORNEY

Anyone who has left the profession
— *F G Burris*

Alan Schlosl, Michael Schlosl, US National Lawyers Guild (for all they all do)
No question. Resigned from Quan administration over occupy. Has represented so many Occupy folks as well as others. — *Gopal Dayaneni*

Joshua Sahun
Subject of *Crime After Crime* and fighter for justice. Took on the system and uncovered massive corruption. Spent seven years fighting pro bono for an innocent woman to be released from prison. — *Leah Saffian*

MOST REVOLUTIONARY CITY OR CITY INITIATIVE

Richmond
Green mayor grassroots effort took over city council despite MILLIONS against them from Chevron. Revolution in a company town. — *Gopal Dayaneni*

representing California's million-strong medical marijuana users and their allies at the highest levels of the California courts. Elford is among the qualified to defend patient rights at the California Supreme Court having already done so once in the precedent-setting *Ross v. Raging River Telecommunications, Inc* (which ruled that employers have a right to terminate an employee who tests positive for marijuana, even if he or she has a doctor's recommendation for it). This summer Elford will write a hefty amicus brief to defend the model dispensary regulations of Oakland and San Francisco, which could be overturned by a court ruling this fall. The Yale Law School graduate has also defended celebrity grower Ed Rosenthal in a criminal prosecution by the federal government, and compelled the California Highway Patrol to change its policy on seized medical weed. A teacher to public defenders and patients alike, Elford works the system to change it, and ensure safe access to the life-saving drug.

BEST DRUG-POLICY SPEAKER

Deborah Small

When historians write about the end of pot prohibition in America, they'll note that the support of women and communities of color proved essential. Emerging these communities is Deborah Small, former director of public policy for the Drug Policy Alliance, and current executive director of Break the Chains, a Berkeley-based advocacy group working to end the War on Drugs. A self-identified Democratic Socialist, Small is a superb leader of a revolutionary group who helped get the NAACP to endorse the decriminalization of weed. Small is a New York native and received a bachelor of science from City College of New York, and a joint juris doctor/master's in public policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Current drug policy has created another kind of Jim Crow in America. Break the Chains believes, and Small's eloquent impatient outspoken dissent is building a chorus for change.

BEST CHARTER EDUCATOR

Dale Sky Jones

These are heavy days at Oaksterdam University. The revolutionary five-year-old medical cannabis college once thrived in downtown Oakland, and has graduated more than 13,000 students. But earlier this year federal agents raided the school, marking the biggest escalation yet in the current federal crackdown on California's blooming marijuana related businesses. Federal agents seized the college's computers, files, and bank accounts and Oaksterdam founder Richard Lee has since resigned in order to deal with what could be pending federal charges. Instructor Dale Sky Jones has courageously stepped up as chancellor, trying to resuscitate the badly wounded school and carrying the banner of Oaksterdam forward. Few are as capable. She radiated experience, professionalism and purpose outside the Oaksterdam raid. A media-savvy mother and Prop 19 campaign veteran, she brings a familiar face and focused talking points to an issue that needs her.

BEST GAME MAKER

Will Wright

It's a pretty cool time for East Bay video game designer Will Wright. The creator of *SimCity*, *The Sims*, and *Spore* started out as a two-man shop in 1989, making the first mass-market city simulator. Wright went on to witness the rise of the billion-dollar gaming industry, from its boldhyst roots to games with budgets of tens of millions of dollars and staffs of hundreds. Today, developments like Facebook and smartphones have undermined blockbuster gaming, allowing visionary teams of one and two to have a huge impact again. After leaving Electronic Arts, Wright co-founded the East Bay think tank Stupid Fun Club, which provides "ideas and creative solutions" for the gaming industry and others. So far, it has re-designed the ant farm and created new screensaver software. But we know Wright has got some more games in him, and the world has never been more ready for them.

BEST [illegible]

Minh Oang

The bad news is that, according to the FBI, Oakland is one of the nation's hubs for sex trafficking — particularly of minors. But the good news is that there are more and more grassroots organizations working hard to stop the practice — and more survivors who are speaking out. Take Minh Dung, a master's of social work/PhD candidate at UC Berkeley who was sex trafficked at age 16 by her parents and remained enslaved for ten years. Dung now serves as a co-facilitator of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse meetings in Berkeley and as a board member for local nonprofit Youth Engagement Advocacy Housing (YEAH!) recently she participated in Project Peace's speaker series' lecture "The Slave Next Door: Making Justice Personal." For Dung, the personal is most definitely the political — and her story challenges us to open our eyes to the injustices occurring right in our own backyard.

BEST [illegible] TO BE THE FULLEST COACH

Tiffany Moore

TiffanyMoore.net

What with the world ending in December (according to the ancient Mayans), there's no more time to procrastinate with that big project you've been dreaming about for so long — the new novel the new business, the new career. Who better to help than life coach Tiffany Moore, a self-proclaimed "lover, dreamer and imaginator" whose "favorite color is polka dots"? It's not therapy Moore offers, or even consulting (she won't be telling you what to do) but rather the collaborative oomph you need to spark that creative flame. Moore's basic package is $300 per month for a minimum four-month commitment it gets you a dozen 45-minute sessions But she also offers a turbo pack for those who need a kick-start $250 for one 90-minute session and 30-minute follow-up. As one of Moore's clients said, "Tiffany's coaching isn't so much about fitting more into life but rather getting more out of it."

BEST DIY COMPANY

Back to the Roots

2035 Adeline St., Oakland, 510-922-9758, Backtotho@gets.com

Want to grow your own mushrooms and divert waste from the landfill at the same time? Back to the Roots enables you to do just that Founded in 2009 by two UC Berkeley undergrads Alejandro Velez and Nikhil Arora, the West Oakland based company collects used coffee grounds from local cafes like Peet's and uses them in its "grow-your-own" mushroom kits. It turns out the pearl oyster mushrooms grow quite well in coffee grounds, and the DIY kit which yields up to a pound and a half, makes it easy and affordable for anyone to do it in the comforts of their own home — green thumb not required. All the ready-to-grow mushroom kit needs is sunlight water (a spray master is included), and about ten days on a windowsill to grow straight from the box. By the end of summer Back to the Roots will begin offering a compostable kit embedded with tomato parsley basil and onion seeds — simply plant it in your garden and use the remaining coffee grounds from the mushroom kit as fertilizer ■

Categories We Didn't Think Of

BEST ADVICE TO OCCUPY OAKLAND

Unite people, don't alienate them

— Lloyd Lwagento

BEST PLACE TO GET YEAR-OASSEO

Frank Ogwa Plaza

— Jon a DeWolf

LAST BEST PLACE

Knowland Park

About to be destroyed for an extinction themed exhibit by The Oakland Zoo — *Ray West*

BEST PROGRESSIVE ARTS AND ACADEMICS PROGRAM

Weldon Center and School

Turning out creative, compassionate, ethical thinkers for more than fifty years — *wdgr*

BEST OAKLAND HISTORIAN

Annalee Allen

Annalee Allen has been a leader in the historic preservation community in Oakland. She had lead the Oakland History Tour featuring downtown Oakland's beautiful historic resources. Annalee has written several books on Oakland including her most recent book, *Oakland Landmarks*. She is such a special resource, the go-to person on any and all questions about Oakland history and culture. Annalee deserves this award! — *Brooke A. Levin*

BEST PLACE TO WALK YOUR DOG

Tilden Park in Berkeley

Some trails allow you to walk your dog off leash It's paradise for dogs! — *Kirstin*

BEST SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Berkeley Unified School District

Its long strong history of in house union drivers busing the children of Berkeley up and down school corridors unbroken since 1968 when — first in the nation — the transportation department was created in order to bus children for racial integration This while Boston was rioting against it. Still in house (increasingly rare in this state thank you voters/taxpayers of Berkeley!), still unionized still serving the needs of families and children while striving for social equity to the field trip tee — again thanks to fund ng from Berkeley taxpayers, not the state, our students get outside more than most A proud tradition continues. — *Steve Hawley*

BEST VIEWS OF THE BAY

Grizzly Peak Boulevard in the Oakland/Berkeley Hills

— Nin King









RESTAURANTS & BARS

REVOLUTION

THE BEST OF THE EAST BAY 2012



Brunch standards: Cock-a-Doodle Cafe

Chris Duffey

BEST EGGS BENEDICT

Cock-a-Doodle Cafe

713 Washington St., Oakland, 510-465-5400, CocksDoodleCafe.com

When was it that the Benedict became the patriot of breakfast foods? The Nineties, maybe? It's a formerly-exotic and expensive culinary treat suddenly foisted — for better or usually for worse — on every unsuspecting gooey spoon and breakfast joint in the Bay Area, and it's shockingly easy to mess up. But Cock A Doodle's elevated the English muffin-eggs-Hollandaise template to an art form with its extensive menu of Cuban-inflected takes on the classic. The Cajun Tilapia Benedict for example, with its unexpected use of a decidedly-non-breakfasty protein and spicy kick, offers an ever-so-subtle subversion of the form and the crab cakes Benedict goes for all-out richness with its perfectly crisp crab cakes, fluffy potato cakes swapped in for English muffin and a son of chipotle hollandaise big and rich enough to make Michelle Obama weep. It's eggs Benedict on steroids, or maybe it's just evolution.

MOST-BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK JAPANESE RESTAURANT

B-Dama

4301A Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-428-1578, B-Dama-Gets.com

If you were to judge *izakaya* based on its Bay Area representatives you might conclude that it's one of the most rarefied of high-end cuisines, accessible on the regular only to the One Percent — special-occasion-only for everyone else. But according to Chikara Ono, chef at Piedmont Avenue's B-Dama, an Japan *izakayas* occupy a very different place in the culinary landscape. They're working-class watering holes, where anyone ought to be able to afford to grab a meal while throwing back a few sakes. At B-Dama, most items on the menu are less than $9, and the yakitori skewers all cost $3.50 or less. Our favorites are some of the restaurant's cold preps, the uemono and sunomono, plus some unusual salads. But the best thing is that, at these prices, you can afford to be more daring when you order — even if you hit the (very) occasional dud, it won't be a big loss.

BEST GERMAN RESTAURANT

Gaumenkitzel

2121 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-647-5815, Gaumenkitzel.net

For those who aren't well versed in the diversity of German cuisine, there's often an assumption that it's all pretty heavy-handed: big sausages, big pieces of fried pork, heaping mounds of vinegar-drenched sauerkraut. At Gaumenkitzel experience the lighter side of modern German cuisine. Sure, there's plenty of meat — the pan-fried schnitzel is the best we've had, and the skinny grilled Nürnberger Bratwürste sausages and the smoked pork loin (served with a healthy portion of "kraut") are all divine. But Chef Anja Voth has an especially light touch with vegetables, a talent best showcased in whatever seasonal soup she happens to be serving. The meat is all sustainably sourced (often pasture-raised even) and Voth makes nearly everything on the menu from scratch — down to the freshly-flaked oats she uses for the porridge and granola she serves at Gaumenkitzel's vastly underrated weekend brunch.

MOST IRREVERENT TAKE ON A TRADITIONAL DISH

Shepherd's Pie at Haven

44 Webster St., Oakland, 510-863-4446, HavenOakland.com

Perhaps no new Oakland restaurant has made as big a splash as Haven. Daniel Patterson's latest venture, Chef Kim Alter who helms the restaurant has a penchant for experimentation — especially for wild riffs on familiar comfort-food favorites — which has immediately placed her among the ranks

Dry, fruity and lightly spiced. But that's just the first sip.



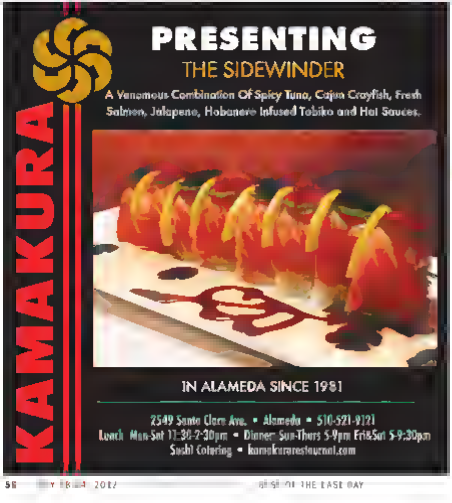
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Readers Poll Winners

BEST AFRICAN RESTAURANT
Cafe Colucci

BEST BAR
Bar Three Fifty-Five

BEST BARTENDER
Cory Abshear Bar Three Fifty-Five
Tiny Bayless, Bar Three Fifty-Five
Nicole Raynes, The Bight Light (tie)

BEST BARBECUE
Everett and Jones

BEST BREAKFAST/BRUNCH
Brown Sugar Kitchen

BEST BUFFET
Bacheeno's

BEST CHINESE RESTAURANT
Shan Dong

BEST COCKTAIL
Carter Beats the Devil at Flora

BEST COFFEE
Peet's

BEST CUPCAKES
James and the Giant Cupcake

BEST DESSERT
Salted Caramel Pudding at Flora

BEST GAY BAR
White Horse Inn

BEST GLUTEN-FREE DISH
Gluten-Free Mac n' Cheese at Homeroom

BEST ICE CREAM
Ici

BEST INDIAN/PAKISTANI RESTAURANT
Agarin

BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANT
Dopo

BEST JAPANESE/SUSHI
Kirala

BEST JUKEBOX AT A BAR
Heart and Dagger Saloon

BEST KOREAN RESTAURANT
Bowl'd

BEST LOCALLY SOURCED/ORGANIC MENU
Gather

BEST MEXICAN OR CENTRAL AMERICAN RESTAURANT
Picante

BEST MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANT
La Mediterranee

BEST MOBILE FOOD VENDOR
Fivetenburger

BEST NEW BAR
The Night Light

BEST NEW RESTAURANT
Camel

BEST PIZZA
Zachary's Chicago Pizza

BEST SANDWICHES
Geneva Delicatessen

BEST SOUTHERN/SOUL FOOD
Souley Vegan

BEST TACO TRUCK
Taqueria Sanaloa

BEST THAI/LAO/BURMESE RESTAURANT
Burma Superstar

BEST VEGETARIAN/VEGAN RESTAURANT
Souley Vegan

BEST VIETNAMESE/CAMBODIAN RESTAURANT
Le Cheval

MOST COURAGEOUS CHEF
Carol Gilliland, A Loveable Feast

MOST CREATIVE DRINKS
Flora

MOST SUBVERSIVE USE OF INGREDIENTS
Gather

of the East Bay's most creative cooks. Not every experiment was a success during the restaurant's initial months, but our favorite was one of Haven's earliest signature dishes, a deconstructed shepherd's pie that eschewed two of the pub classic's most basic ingredients: the lamb and the mashed potatoes. Instead, Alter used ground pork, but that had been seasoned with winter spices and, most surprising of all, a light potato espuma — a foam. Basically. And yet, it was as tasty and comforting a dish for a cold winter night as any traditional shepherd's pie we've ever had. Haven's menu changes frequently, but hopefully Alter will bring this dish back soon.

BEST VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

Nature Vegetarian Restaurant

1116 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-238-9688

Too often when people bring up the topic of vegetarian cuisine in this country, there's this notion that it's all sprouts and nuts, "hippie food." That's just silly, especially in the Bay Area, where there's such a diversity of veggie fare — from the elegant multi-layered creations at a place like Gather right down to your hole-in-the-wall fairfield joints. And sometimes it's good to remind ourselves of the vegetarian traditions of other cultures: In China, for instance, Buddhists developed a cuisine that's rooted in various permutations of tofu and wheat gluten (also used, in other words, in Oakland, there's no better place to snarf in the stuff than at Nature Vegetarian, where chef-owner Juan Lin — a devout Buddhist himself — makes all of the restaurant's gluten- and soy-based meat substitutes in house. Menu highlights include the super-crispy, sesame "chicken"; roast "duck" made from tofu skins; and stuffed eggplant that's batter-fried, shaped like a whole fish and carved tableside. All this served with a smile in one of the most tranquil dining rooms in all of Chinatown.

Rikyu

JAPANESE RESTAURANT

After 25 years of preparing authentic Japanese cuisine for exceptional restaurants such as Kiku of Tokyo, Mikoku San Francisco, Kirala of Berkeley and We Be Sushi, Chef **Tatsuya Koyake** decides to have his own space to share his passion for cooking. Come join him for a taste of Japan.

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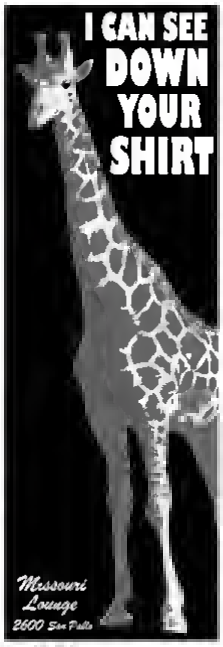
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Best restaurant where you can eat with your hands: Rockin Crawfish. Chris Duffey

BEST RESTAURANT WHERE YOU CAN EAT WITH YOUR HANDS

Rockin' Crawfish

211 Foothill Blvd., Ste. B Oakland, 510-251-1857 TheRockinCrawfish.com

There's something deeply satisfying about going out to dinner and being able to forgo the trappings of civilized restaurant etiquette. Knife? Fork? Spoon? No thank you! At Oakland's "Asian Cajun" specialist Rockin Crawfish, most of the food is cooked in sauce-filled bags, which your server then cuts open tableside, emptying the contents onto big plastic plates. You *could* ask for utensils, but most everyone just digs in with their bare hands, discarding sucked-clean shrimp heads and other sea-creature carcasses aside as they go. With such a simple cooking method, the freshness of the seafood and the flavor of the sauces are key — we like the garlic-butter sauce for clams and the Cajun-inflected "rockin combo" sauce (set to your personal spice preference) for everything else. Make sure you ask for a plastic bib and plenty of hand wipes. Meanwhile, the giant waffle fries (also eaten with your hands, natch) are one of our favorite guilty pleasures.

BEST $10 LUNCH

Hawker Fare

2330 Webster St., Oakland, 510-832-8896, HawkerFare.com

We're firm believers that the food revolution has less to do with what you can order at a high-end farm-to-table affair somewhere out in wine country and much more to do with what kind of food working-class blokes and blokettes can get for $10 during their well-deserved lunch break. Enter Hawker Fare, the down-home rice-bowl joint by Oakland's Michelin-starred chef James Syhabout. Here, Chef Justin Yu is putting out the kind of food he and Syhabout enjoy eating: straight up Thai-inspired rice bowls with unmistakeable Southeast Asian flavors and just a few well-executed modern flourishes. Our favorites are the sous vide *khao mun gai* (poached chicken) and the spicy, savory *sisrin* sausage patties, but it's all good. Best of all: everything's less than $10. Check that. Adding a fried farm egg to your rice bowl for $1.50 will put you just over budget but we *highly* recommend making that modest splurge.

BEST FOOD TRUCK/STAND

Fivetenburger

512-545 3488, Fivetenburger.com

Forget the food truck qualifications: the burgers Roland Rables is slinging from his Oakland-based "burgermobile" are some of the best in the Bay Area, bar none. At Fivetenburger well-executed simplicity is the name of the game. Too often restaurants get so carried away with fancy toppings (brave-aged blue cheese truffles! caviar!) that they lose sight of their burger basics: patty, bun, and only a judicious use of accoutrements that'll enhance — not overwhelm — the main attractions. Fivetenburger offers some fancy upgrades, like a grass-fed version available for a modest $2 upcharge but we've never been disappointed with the basic $6.75 "loaded" burger. First and foremost, the beef patty is well seasoned and cooked perfectly to order (medium rare,

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Blame Sally


Lalah Hathaway


Meshell Ndegeocello


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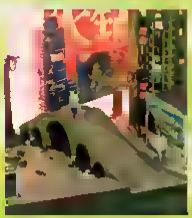
STIVAL JUST GOT BETTER.



Ramekon O'Arwisters

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Taro Hatton, Namrta Kapoor,
Masako Miyazaki
Tracey Snelling, John Wood,
de Young Artist Fellows
and Artist-In-Residence Alumni,
Todd T. Brown & Ramekon O'Arwisters
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Tracey Snelling



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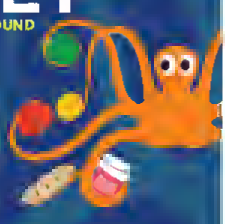
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Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST AFRICAN RESTAURANT

Enaara Ethiopian
"Yum tis best around. Never over ever spa letchya down!" — *John Fabe Arnold III*

Thai Ethiopian restaurant on Telegraph
— *Mike Ortega*

BEST BAR

Bar Three Fifty-Five
Amazing cocktails, great ambiance, good people no bullsh*t. — *zaxeg66*

Cole's Ale House
They have excellent food (now with REAL FRIES) and great staff members, not to mention a great drink selection and cool atmosphere. The people-watching from the covered patio is great, too. And when trivia night. — *David Prosper*

Forbidden Island Tiki Lounge
Every drink is made like a science experiment and is designed to knock you on your ass. — *Jamie DeWolf*

Heinold's First and Last Chance
... Although Merchant's Saloon is a close, drunk second. — *Rikki Thompson*

Missouri Lounge
Stiff drinks, open mic nights, outdoor patio deck for smokers with a bar heating lamps, and tables so you can get your drink/smoke/grub on!! YEAH! — *Nikki Mariachi*

Ruby Room
Classic. Cheap. Fun. Not too divey. Dark. Very dark. — *Chris Vine*

Somerset
It closes too early, but they really know how to make drinks, and it's normally quiet enough that you can have a conversation. — *Liz Brubaker*

BEST BARTENDER

Build guy at Starry Plough
— *Beth Binder/McClendon*

Kali Rivers, Ruby Tuby Club, Albany
She's fast, friendly, knowledgeable, full of jokes, plays cool music, and sometimes even brings world-class homemade stew to the bar for the patrons. — *Matthew Fuhrer-LaPlaca*

BEST BARBECUE

B Side BBQ!
Holy poop. B Side is good! And beautiful. In a neighborhood that needs some extra TLC, Danya Holland brings it again. Go there. Now (or as soon as you're hungry). — *poppyanndy*

Brisk Pig House, Oakland
Too obscure to be hip, too delicious to go unnoticed. — *rushmiller*

pleased) malt and every time. And all the other components — the toasted bun, the homemade pickles, the restrained application of ketchup, mayo and mustard — are just right. Eat your burger standing up. Trust us, it tastes even better that way.

MOST CREATIVE IZAKAYA

Kiraku

2566B Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-2788, KirakuBerkeley.com

Now that the East Bay has the luxury of about a half a dozen decent options for Japanese *izakaya* (you should head over to Kiraku where you can feast on idiosyncratic small plate offerings like crunchy corn tempura dusted with green tea salt. And if you ever get bored of the regular menu (you won't), there are always interesting daily specials which might include a few varieties of sashimi you haven't heard of before or if you're lucky, a bowl of remarkably tender — "silky" doesn't begin to describe it — house-made tofu served over a bed of ice. Daiki and Sanae Saito, the husband-and-wife team that runs Kiraku, are putting out smart whimsical food — and most importantly almost all of it is delicious.

BEST USE OF JUNK FOOD IN A RECIPE

Frito Pie at Smokey J's Q House

3615 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-647-8442, SmokeyJsBBQ.com

Sure, this sword sounds more like a wacky *Top Chef* challenge than a legitimate category in reviews, but the Frito pie actually has a decades-long history with roots in the American Southwest. It's basically a casserole made with Fritos (or other corn chips), chili, cheddar cheese, sour cream, jalapenos, green onions and Chef Josh Kemper's excellent house-made barbecue sauce — thank the best plate of nachos you've ever had, useless degrees of order better than when you were ever able to jury-rig using your dorm-room microwave. For an extra $2 charge (bringing the total to a still-reasonable $8.99), Smokey J's ups the ante and adds your choice of slow smoked meats to the mix. We like our Frito pie best with pulled pork, but the pulled chicken and — if you're feeling especially decadent — the fatty, crisp-edged brisket would also be excellent additions.

BEST [illegible]KEY UNDER THE RADAR CAFE

Room 389

389 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-836-6389, Room389Oakland.com

So it turns out that one of Oakland's most low-key places to wind down with a cappuccino and a pastry is a Grand Avenue bar. For the past several months, Room 389 has transformed into a sleepy, quaint cafe during the mornings and afternoons. There's always chill music playing (often reggae) and because there aren't big crowds like there are at night you can hang out wherever you want — on the rust, front patio at the bar or even sprawled out on the couches in back. The cafe serves better-than-solid Roast Co. espresso drinks and Bicycle Coffee drip coffee, plus a small selection of Starter Bakery pastries that are priced lower — $3 across the board — than you'll find at a lot of places. At lunchtime, check out the killer grilled



Best place to ignore your neighbo... Comal

Chris Duffley

cheese sandwiches. There's even free wi-fi. (But don't tell the laptop drones: Once that cat is out of the bag, they might just ruin the place for the rest of us.)

BEST INDIAN STREET SNACK

Kathi Roll at Wrap N' Roll

913 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-1100, WrapNRollBerkeley.com

Berkeley has no shortage of tasty Indian street food — of *pani puri* and *pakoras* and *chole bhature* — especially with an institution like Vik's Chaat garnering multiple well-deserved kudos. But perhaps the most satisfying street snack of all is sold at an unlikely location, a nondescript deli on the west end of University Avenue. Among the (quite good) gyro wraps and other standard sandwich options on the menu at Wrap N' Roll is something call a *kathi* roll, which is a freshly griddled Indian flatbread that's stuffed with cumin-spiced masala chicken chunks. The best part is the thin egg omelet that coats the inside of the wrap, adding an extra layer of richness. Oh, and it's a little bit sweet, so you can thus gloriously greasy, Indian "burrito" a snack — a single *kathi* roll is more than hearty enough to serve as a filling dinner all on its own.

BEST BREAKFAST SANDWICH

Taylor Ham, Egg, and Cheese at Scolari's Good Eats

1303 Park St., Alameda 510-521-2400

For folks who spent their formative years in New Jersey, the Taylor Ham, Egg, and Cheese is the king of all breakfast sandwiches, and a source of unrequited nostalgia — at least until it became a fixture on the daily specials menu at Scolari's Good Eats. Scolari's version has stellar building blocks: a toasted challah bun, high quality cheddar cheese, an outrageously runny fried egg that's cooked until just set and still quivering, and all the traditional condiments (salt, pepper, ketchup). And the star of the show: several slices of well-griddled Taylor ham — a salty, uber-creamy, processed pork product that any Spam lover will adore. Our only complaint is that Scolari's never opens earlier than 11:30 a.m., meaning this is a breakfast sandwich we have to eat for lunch. But who are we kidding? We've happily eaten this so-called "dressy Breakfast" for dinner more times than we can count.

BEST FAST FOOD FRIED CHICKEN

TC Fried Chicken & Fish

At Rainbow Donuts, 2025 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-644-2029

A few months ago, TC Fried Chicken & Fish set up shop inside a run-of-the-mill doughnut shop on San Pablo Avenue, and the little hole-in-the-wall remains one of Berkeley's best kept secrets. Disregard the fact that the place has more lotto machines than tables. While we dig Popeye's chicken as much as anyone (there's a branch right down the street), TC hucks things up a notch — mainly by serving fast food chicken that's, well, a little bit slow. You won't ever find more than a few pieces of chicken sitting in the display case, and that means your order is almost always going to be fried fresh to order. The results speak for themselves: TC's chicken is served up juicy and plump, but with a shatteringly crisp batter that's surprisingly low on grease. Bargain hunters take note: The $2.49 dark-meat special (for a thigh and a drumstick) is one of the best deals in town.

BEST PLACE TO IGNORE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Comal

2020 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-926-6300, ComalBerkeley.com

As much as squash blossom quesadillas and a tequila-centric cocktail menu designed by The Bon Vivants are, they pale in comparison to the inventive way in which Berkeley's Comal has revolutionized the oft-dreaded communal table. Instead of listening to a couple drone on about the tedium of their days or overhearing a tipsy twenty-something bemoan the Bay Area's dating scene, Comal's first-of-its-kind sound system reduces any distracting discussions into an indistinguishable din. The sound system uses a series of speakers to pick up noise in the room, filter it through a computer, and feed it back into the restaurant to create acoustic "marshmallows." Voices are only distinguishable in the direction they are projected, and others get washed into the general noise of the surrounding area where they are blended and blurred. The dimensions of both communal tables were also chosen carefully. Owner John Paluska decided to max out the table widths at three feet, the greatest distance a dining party can be separated while still being conducive to conversation and raise the table an extra 12 inches to 42 inches to prevent the sensation of being crowded by standing drinkers. Communal tables may be a polarizing concept, but Comal fosters an atmosphere ideal for sharing a meal with a table full of strangers.

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST BARBECUE (CONT'D)

Rockin' It BBQ

No. 1 reeling Contest — *Courtney Supple*

Souper Duckboy

Their smoked brisket is divine and I've heard that the pork ribs are excellent — meaty, lean, tender and full of flavor — and the tea-smoked salmon is amazing. They have a wide variety of sides — the cornbread is fabulous, the blue cheese coleslaw dressing is scrumptious and they have barely keep up with the demand for pork mochi pancakes — and frequently have surprise desserts (the pecan pie is to die for) and cookies. There's clearly a lot of love and pride in all of their offerings! — *lelilch ah*

There is no BBQ in California

— *John Felix Arnold III*

BEST BREAKFAST/BRUNCH

900 Grayson

The devil chicken and waffles is awesome, especially if you like me, demand chicken that is not attached to the bone and minus all the gross cartilaginous stuff. And GREAT COFFEE. — *Daniel Prosper*

Animal Cafe

Skip the hour-plus wait at all the sit-down brunch places, and get some delicious soulful food here. Bacon/parmesan waffles, poached eggs with polenta and roasted tomatoes! And no laptops on the weekends ... hack-yes — *poppinmonkey*

Brown Sugar Kitchen

I'm completely addicted to their shrimp and grits ... and I don't even like grits! — *Madeline Bills*

Cafe Rouge

BOTTOMLESS MIMOSAS. MANY FLAVORS. LOUD MUSIC. — *Mirande Kuwait*

Lois The Pie Queen

You cannot beat the hats during Sunday brunch! — *Courtney Supple*

Ola's Waffle House

Quality, consistency, good prices and a whole lot of yummy food. The corned beef hash on weekends gets me up to run from Berkeley to Alameda for a to-go order! — *lelilch ah*

Venus

What's else can you get a breakfast that is not only delicious but makes you feel like if you never eat something healthy again that you'll still be okay? — *Sonya Calhoun*

BEST BUFFET

Kirin

— *eborden*

Vegas

— *mike.gunky*







Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST CHINESE RESTAURANT

Great China
Yes, it burned down. But it will be back, with the best wine list in the Bay Area, and I am not even joking/exaggerating. — *supergeil*

Lin Jia
Organic meal and no MSG! — *alekaelmontrast*

THE ANN, Alameda
(BEST dumplings on planet earth. Addictive!! — *Daniel Puertas*

BEST COCKTAIL

Heavy Tetsy's Pisco Sour
This cocktail competed with the world. — *Matthew Pabor LePlace*

Oakhaven Hotel at Pinoleyo
Worth a trip from New York. — *Dane Campbell*

BEST COFFEE

Arbor
The coffee selection is great, the staff rules, and it's so big and cozy. — *Daniel Prosper*

Rhizomorph Cafe on Broadway!
Funny that the best coffee is to be found at a chocolate shop ... — *Christine Boschen Ghadiri*

Blue Bottle
We call it "crack in a cup" — *Victoria Argello*

Gold Coffee
Best selections at the best price by far, without the snootiness. — *supergeil*

Bay of the Dead Cafe
Life, speed in a cup. — *Matthew Pabor LePlace*

Farley's Coffee
I'm actually voting from this place right now — *Armando Garcia*

Mr. Espresso, Oakland
We accept no other in our household — *Kihntu*

Peets
Coffee as we know it. Peet created the coffee culture in America — *Tom Bruce*

BEST CUPCAKES

Jones and The Giant Cupcake
Chocolate cupcake with cream cheese frosting, caramel and sea salt is bangin — *Heather Mueller*

BEST DESSERT

Cocorosie's chocolate croissant bread pudding with Mexican chocolate ice cream
Or something like that. It's out of this fucking world, ooey gooey chocolatey goodness. — *supergeil*

BEST PARK/PICNIC/BRUNCH

Rogue Café

3204 Ellis St, Berkeley 510-520-6782, Facebook.com/RogueCafe

Sitting amidst a jumble of mismatched lawn furniture with a low-built tree house for VIP's brunchers at Rogue Café are drawn there as much for the tasty vittles as for an authentic sun-dappled Berkeley experience. Rogue was created by the owners of fledgling coffee roaster One Ninety Seven Coffee, a way to showcase their java by serving it with morning fare (like wine pairings for the 'breakfast set). Initial invitees were friends, then it expanded to friends of friends and now, Rogue is a full-fledged commercial operation ... in the backyard of Pacanello's flower arranger. The menu shifts with the seasons — and the owners' whimsy — and is only limited by what can be produced in a tiny corrugated metal shack (Rogue's makeshift kitchen). Recent offerings have included sourdough waffles with a Meyer lemon glaze, seasoned beets with an avocado crostini, house-made sausage and house-made granola. But visit Rogue Café now, in operation this successful is bound to land a real brick-and-mortar at some point.

BEST KOSHER FAST FOOD

Amba Falafel

6464 Monroe Ave., Oakland, 510-339-8900, AmbaFalafel.com

Nestled in the sleepy Montclair district is Amba Falafel, a curious hybrid of the commercial and the reverential. Owner Jonathan Wornick has dual ambitions — to create America's first Israeli street food chain and to make a community hub for the East Bay's significant Jewish population. On one hand Amba keeps strictly kosher has a ritual hand washing station with prayers and yarmulkes and shuts down on Friday nights and all day Saturday (in observance of the Sabbath). Eat Amba is also a purveyor of top-notch Israeli street food: crisp but chewy falafel, creamy house-made hummus and a killer fried eggplant sandwich called a *sabich*. Wornick has empire-building on the mind, and future Amba outposts may not be as friendly to the religiously observant. But at the original location, Orthodox teenagers can chow on pizza and French fries. Chabad members can knock back a beer or two, and Jews and gentiles alike can feast on affordable, well prepared Israeli fare.

BEST MUSEUM CAFE

Babette

2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-684-3646, BabetteCafe.com

Winning the title of best museum cafe is like being the best airplane or hospital cafeteria food. The bar is set pretty low. But Babette, the farm-to-table cafe inside the Berkeley Art Museum happily ignores the standard museum-cafe tropes. Both of Babette's owners have deep roots cooking in the Bay Area and their original intent was to open a free-standing, full-service restaurant. They never lost their vision they just scaled it back a bit. With a stylish modernist meets-verdant design and a locally sourced menu that switches each week, it's easy to forget where you are. Expect rustic fare that spans the globe, like red beans and rice

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST GAY BAR

Dumb and Bar
Bilingual karaoke going. — *Miranda Everitt*

Club 1010
It's like Cheers for people on this side of the Caldecott tunnel. — *Mollie Ayres*

BEST ICE CREAM

Flavor Brigade
A jewel in the Diamond District. The best frozen custard in the land and reasonable prices. — *Jeff Villafranca*

Lizard's – Alameda
You can tell they use real cream!!! — *Lori McD*

Cook Kubota
Ditch the lines at Ici—this place has the stuff. — *Tom Holub*

Sorbant Sorbet
Not really ice cream? Not close enough? So good! — *Ashley Rocco Polefko*

BEST INDIAN/PAKISTANI RESTAURANT

Kokkuna, Berkeley
Owner is a veteran of the soup Nazi, which adds to the allure. — *Alden Mudge*

BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANT

34 Mint, Concord
Outside, strip mall. Inside, Northern Italy. Seriously. Go and be transported. — *Christine Boschen Ghodrati*

Trattoria Lauraline
Most "user-friendly" Italian joint not afraid of garlic, over-generous portions. BEST pricing. WE LOVE YOU CHEF TERRELL! — *Carol Langergan*

BEST JAPANESE/SUSHI RESTAURANT

Cosoh Sushi
Sushi is good, but DAMN that $3.50 bottomless sake is irresistible. And Cosoh is amazing; he brews and bids you good night outside the restaurant as you're stumbling out the door! — *Nikki Marquez*

Kaoniwa
This restaurant has been consistently the best Japanese restaurant in Alameda since the late Fifties. The food is excellent and well prepared. — *Rich Sussman*

Kinzie
Sashimi like velvet. Wonderful everything. — *Seana Hensley*

BEST JUKEBOX AT A BAR

Rotsy Totsy Club
It's great to see a Wurlitzer Americana filled with 45s in this day and age when every other place is going the digital jukebox route. Oh yeah, did I mention that it's free? — *Matthew Pilzer LePlace*

with collard greens, Vietnamese chicken *banh mi* beef and basil clubs, and a goat-cheese-and-heirloom tomato tart. With food this good, it's no surprise that many of Babette's walk-in customers have no idea the cafe is connected to BAM.

MOST UNDERRATED FOOD CITY

Alameda

Oakland deserves all the press it gets as America's next great food destination, but the city's easterly neighbor Alameda doesn't get nearly the attention it should among Bay Area foodies. Sure, the island city isn't a good place to go looking for trendy Michelin star chasing eateries. But block for block, the Park Street corridor matches up well with just about any neighborhood in the East Bay in terms of both the quality and diversity of food. Want souped up East Coast comfort food? Try Scelzo's Good Eats. Creative pastrami fare? Head over to American Oak. Wood fired pizza? East End Pizza Co. is tough to beat. Southeast Asian food? Check out any of the three or four great options that are within a two-minute walk of each other. Meanwhile, don't miss Webster Street, on the other side of town, where among other deliciousness you'll find Jukkasa pan African fare (Selefi's African Cuisine) and the best dim sum in the East Bay (East Ocean Seafood Restaurant).

BEST INDIAN FOOD

Spice Hut

30277 Cedar Blvd., Newark, 510-745-9870, SpiceHut.com

Tucked behind a Jiffy Lube in Newark, Spice Hut is an unpretentious, strip-mall-set South Indian restaurant that can relieve you to tears. Not only because the complex curries — such as its creamy tart vegetable korma and zesty-spice chicken *chettinad* — are hot enough that beads of sweat will roll into your eyes, but also because its dishes move you to a certain private joy. Such catharsis comes cheap: A four-item combo large enough to feed two is less than ten dollars. It's financially practical enough that one can order something a little bit difficult, like *gobi* Manchurian from the Indian-Chinese section of the menu or battered chunks of cauliflower fried and drenched in a sweet spicy finger-sucking sauce. It's enough to blind you to the formica tables, disposable plates, and handheld vibrating devices that alert you when your food is ready.

EE... AJUN [illegible]S NE (NOT FOR THE MILD)

OB's Cafe

729 Washington St., Oakland, 510-268-9698 OBsCafes.com

The owner of OB's Cafe in Old Oakland is a notorious crank. He opens and closes when he feels like it, kicks customers out for minor infractions (like asking for menus or a glass of water), and generally conveys an air of menace from the moment you set foot inside. But tough it out, and you'll be rewarded with some of the finest Cajun cuisine in the Bay Area. Owner/chef/sole employee Juvonito De La Cruz De Montilleda (aka Oli) spends copious amounts of time loitering over each dish, ultimately tossing out intense and surprising flavor profiles. The results bear the mark of his personalized care, like the crave-inducing shrimp and grits and



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Grand Opening

SOUTH BERKELEY FARMER'S MARKET

Festivities begin with City Councilperson Max Anderson welcoming the Market to its new neighborhood, followed by a theater performance by new neighbors The Shotgun Players; live jazz; and African dancing and music with Rehema Afful Nyanner

When: Tuesday July 24 2012 Market Hours 2:00 pm 6:30 pm

Where: South Berkeley Farmers Market
Adeline St. at 63rd Street (just south of Alcatraz Ave.)
Please Note: this is a new location

(510) 548-3333 www.ecologycenter.org

the fiery jambalaya, and are more than worth any grief you may suffer. Plus anyone willing to play by OB's rules might find a clichéd heart of gold hiding under that gruff exterior. Oh, but word to the wise: Don't ask for takeout.

BEST REASON TO GO TO EMERYVILLE RIGHT NOW

Honor Bar

1411 Powell St., Emeryville, 510-653-0844, HonorBar.com

Emeryville means many things to many people, but they're almost always either wrecker IKEA related. Fun city with fascinating and not insignificant history as hub for prostitution, gambling, illegal drinking, and various other forms of Prohibition and Depression-era lewdness (hence the nickname "Rotten City"). Emeryville's long been lacking in the nightlife department. Not anymore, however, now that it's become home to not only one of the best bars in the East Bay, but a bona fide destination for drinkers and eaters in San Francisco and beyond. Honor Bar is comfortable but not lazy, kitschy but not obnoxious, friendly but not obsequious, and — here's the most important part — insanely committed to quality. Its drinks are among the most inventive and intricate you'll find for miles and the food is also crafted with the same spirit of creativity. Order a Perfidiata (tequila, mezcal, Cocchi di Torino, Lucas 43, cantaloupe, bitters, $10) and the house marrow (bacon relish, mushrooms, grilled bread, $10) and Emeryville's days as a culinary and cocktail wasteland will begin to feel like a happily distant memory.



Best Chez Panisse spin-off: Dominica Rice's Cosecha Mexican Cafe

Ch—Dufay

BEST HAPPY HOUR

Chevys Fresh Mex

1290 Powell St., Emeryville, 510-653-8210, Chevys.com

Hear us out, okay? Yes, it's a megachain. Yes, going to Chevys for Mexican food when you're anywhere within a ten-mile radius of Fruitvale should be an offense eligible for capital punishment. Yes, it's loud and nearly impossible to get to without a car and sometimes staggeringly expensive. But just try to say all that when you're sitting on Chevys's massive, marina-adjacent deck, sipping a fresh fruit margarita — $3.99 from 2 p.m. through closing, every damn day of the week — and gorging on unlimited chips and salsa as what must be the cheapest waterside dinner in all the Bay Area. You won't be able to, because YOUR MOUTH WILL BE FULL OF DELICIOUS CHIPS AND CRIMINALLY CHEAP MARGARITA. Argument over.

BEST ANTIDOTE TO CORPORATE FRO-YO

Yogurt Park

2433-A Durant Ave., Berkeley, 510-549-9570; 80 Broadway Lane, Walnut Creek, 510-944-4748, YogurtPark.com

Before there was Pinkberry and Yogurtland and Red Mango, before frozen yogurt chains were as ubiquitous as Starbucks and pay-by-weight became the going system, before frozen yogurt began to feel less like the mom-and-pop ice creams shops we grew up with and more like any other megamultistory there was Yogurt Park, founded in Berkeley in 1977 and remaining there ever since (with another location in Walnut Creek). Even as — or, really, despite the fact that — the big chains have continued to multiply, Yogurt Park still looks like something special: a return to simpler times. There's no lychee as fresh fruit in the toppings containers, no neon colors and futuristic plastic furniture, no imperative to mix fifteen flavors into one cup until you just get a rainbow mush. Instead, only six flavors daily, all nondairy, creamier and thicker than everywhere else, mercifully pronounceable, recorded every morning on Yogurt Park's outgoing phone message by the owner and served in heaping portions in a plain ol' paper cup. It's frozen yogurt as it once was, and as it was meant to be.

BEST CHEZ PANISSE SPIN-OFF

Cosecha Mexican Cafe

907 Washington St., Oakland, 510-452-5900, CosechaCafe.com

The consummate Chez Panisse meal is one that has deceived you into thinking that food this naked must come easy. Such sleight-of-hand can also be found at Cosecha, Dominica Rice's place at Swan's Market. Rice's pedigree (Chez Panisse, Ecocito) shows in her tortillas — the texture is by turns soft, crisp, and chewy, and the deep flavors of roasted corn, hot oil, and carbon steel are given their due place on the tongue. Cosecha is a rare fruit on this Panisse family tree thanks to its Mexican sensibilities, its baby toward gut flavors and honorable food sources and its quesadas. Although Cosecha — which seems bound to anchor Old Oakland's resurrection — has plenty of busy hours, one can still find a little bit of peace here, looking out through the open triple-wide doors to the sun-dappled sidewalk, drinking an affordable glass of wine.

MOST GROUND-BREAKING REMODEL

Easy Lounge

3255 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-338-4911, Facebook.com/Easy 510

Less than a year after it received a facelift to make anyone think Real Housewives bail, it's pretty much impossible to remember Easy as it once was. Dark and dance-y have been replaced by light filled and lively conversation-prohibitive loudness by lively inside voices, plush and slightly choosy black leather furniture by cabin cute picnic tables, a swinging bench and a gorgeous copper-topped bar bare-bones bar made by foodie artifacts such as polenta cubes and coconut-milk braised collard greens. Best of all, the bar has, wisely taken its so-called farmers' market cocktail program — formerly Saturday-only — in every day of the week, meaning all of the above comes with such deliciousness as homemade fruitcake bitters, lambic beer kumquats, and about a million other things you never thought you'd see in a highball glass. Leave the wild weekend nights to the other bars; the new Easy's the kind of place you want to be the other six and three-quarters days of the week.

BEST RECURRING FOODIE EVENT

One Fermented Evening

Facebook.com/Pages/One-Fermented-Evening/170629749213

The East Bay is awash in pairing dinners, supper clubs, and sundry other food- and drink-centric activities, but all too often they tend to be didactic, decorous affairs — not to mention prohibitively expensive and disappointingly unusual on the portions front. Not so much with One Fermented Evening, a more-or-less monthly beer-pairing event put on by Terrace Room chef Devyn Bolsen in conjunction with local and local fish beer companies like Anchor Steam, Sierra Nevada Hens, the foodie-fetishism is kept to a welcome minimum: the brewers sit at communal tables with the diners and, for the two or three hours that can encompass these long, languorous dinners, everyone's a friend. Best of all: Over five courses, you get as many brimming glasses of beer (no sample sizes here, thanks) and enough food to feed easily two or three people (Bolsen has taken to warning people at the beginning of each meal that they'll be leaving with at least one takeout container and he is most definitely not lying) — all with white-tablecloth-style service, plus a stunning view of Lake Merritt. Come hungry (and sober).

BEST BARTENDER

Nat Harry at Revival Bar + Kitchen

2102 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-8850, RevivalBarandKitchen.com

A competent bartender knows the difference between tonic and soda, can capably whip up a two-ingredient well drink, and may be able to do something mild to moderately artful with a lemon peel. A good bartender can do all of the above, plus design a signature cocktail here or there. A great bartender doesn't just replicate or build on what's been done already, but completely reimagines what a cocktail can and should be. Nat Harry, as you've surely already guessed, is a great bartender.


In my wallet is a tattered Fat Tire label which I've had for 11 years. Ever since my first one, I immediately fell in love with this refreshing ale and the company's eco-conscience ways. Amongst friends, this label has led to many discussions such as,
"Is it possible to jump a recycling bin on a banana seat bike?"
(Yes, but next time don't pedal so fast!) Thanks Fat Tire for making recycling and biking so much fun.
Frances M. of South Carolina
A lot of people have discovered the tasty joy bottled and canned in Fat Tire Amber Ale. Join them on newbelgium.com and enjoy the ride!
NEW BELGIUM BREWING

Relentlessly adventurous, well-studied but never pretentious about it and personable even at the barn busiest moments, she's the kind of bartender to whom you can ramble off a vague list of likes, dislikes and current cravings and who will then make *exactly the drink you didn't even know you wanted* and which equally at home whipping up drinks with ingredients like mole bitters, cilantro syrup and chamomile liqueur — all house-made, of course — as she is making a standard manhattan, margarita or gin and tonic. Well, "standard" might be an understatement.

BEST DRINKS AT A RESTAURANT

Hudson

5356 College Ave., Oakland, 510-595-4000, HudsonOakland.com

With its neutral palette, 520-plus entries, and decidedly well-heeled clientele, Hudson never needed to be an attractive nightspot. The most welcome of surprises, then, when you saddle up to the bar — alone or in a group, before dinner or as a standalone excursion — and realize that the people behind it really really know what they're doing. Think high-quality ingredients (Velvet Falernum and tobacco tincture), creative combinations (absinthe and black pepper; allspice dram and rosewater) and what must be the most fantastic and fantastical cocktail names in all the East Bay (Lillies and Scythes, Lunatics in the Garden) — all created right in front of you under the watchful eye of Alex Conde, a cult-hero cocktail master with the intuition of a psychic, the mind of a mad scientist and the charm of someone who's been behind the bar for a long time.



BEST FOOD AT A BAR

The District

827 Washington St., Oakland, 510-272-8100, DistrictOak.com

At this point it's fair to say that the days of mixed nuts and microwaved wings as standard bar fare are long gone. But expensive and elevated doesn't always mean good and all sliders were certainly not created equal. The key to mastering this new breed of bar food is balance: really making sure it's high quality, but not as expensive, as a sit-down meal; that it's culinarily adventurous but not too intimidating; when all folks are craving is simple carbs and recognizable dishes, and that it's easy to eat without being yet another sandwich. Suffice it to say that The District Old Oakland's newest addition, manages all of this beautifully with a broad and well-considered menu of bar snacks that can come, together as a full-fledged meal, or just the best bar food you've had in recent memory: sweet Fifth Peppadew peppers stuffed with goat cheese; nuttiness and substantial Moroccan-spiced meatballs; super-fresh ahi tuna tartare, brightened with lemon and enlivened with chili — bar food, but better.

BEST PIZZA IN A FULL-MOON BRIA

Sauce Pizza at the Cheese Board Pizza Collective

1504 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-549-3183, CheeseboardCollective.coop

Cheese Board Pizza is, of course, known far and wide for its Cal-cuisine pizza always vegetarian, often made with exotic vegetables, but curiously, never with sauce. Almost never, that is, because as it turns out even the pioneers of the sauceless pizza crave a little lycopene every now and then. Enter the aptly-named "sauce pizza" served on rare and random occasions but entirely worth the wait. It's got all the typical trademarks of a standard Cheese Board pie, but for a layer of nuttiness, perfectly textured sauce, vegetally sweet and a little spicy, prepared on everything else at Cheese Board is, with love and attention and from high-quality ingredients. You'd be entirely understood for say, visiting the restaurant's website daily and then dropping all plans when it happens to show up, but if you're a normal person, here's a pro tip: The recipes also available in The *Cheese Board Collective Works* cookbook.

BEST AFFORDABLE LOBSTER ROLL

Louisiana Crawfish Roll at Picán

2295 Broadway, Oakland, 510-834-1060, Pican@sbcglobal.net

Most New England transplants have probably long given up on the prospect of getting a decent lobster roll in the Bay Area, and have had to settle for local Dungeness crab — itself a great delicacy, but a different breed of crustacean entirely. This lobster that is available tends to be overpriced and, given the long distance it has to travel, not very fresh-tasting — a fact most vendors try to mask by drowning the meat in pools of sauce. Who would have guessed that the closest thing you can get to an authentic Maine lobster roll gets around these challenges simply by not using lobster at all? Yes, Picán's Louisiana crawfish roll (available only in season and during lunch hours) is the real deal: buttery griddled split-top bun, crunchy cucumbers and — to give the sandwich a Southern slant — a generous slather of Duke's Mayonnaise. Of course, the most important component is the mound of sweet crawfish meat that's just about good enough to make you forget about Maine.

BEST NEW BAR

Make Westing

1741 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-251-1490, MakeWesting.com

Less than ten months after it first opened, it's hard to imagine the corner of 18th and Telegraph without Make Westing. Without that bright white, neon sign out front or the gaggles of glassy-eyed revelers sitting and smoking on sidewalk furniture; without the occasional bocce ball related yelp of cheer or despair sneaking out onto the street over the music; without well, the energy. This is a bar that's instantly hospitable to everyone. The drinks are well made, never fussy, and entirely reasonably priced; the food is easy to eat and order and markedly, wonderfully, heavy on the umami fat and the whole vibe is lively but not too loud, mostly uppointed but not too trendy: a sort of everyman bar for the east century Oaklander. Turns out, you don't need to be old to be an institution.

BEST GONZO BARTENDING OUTFIT

Jupiter Olympus

JupiterOlympus.com

You gotta love a project that operates using the tagline "Imbibus Grata Imbibis" — roughly translated from the Latin, "to drink for the sake of drinking" — but that's far from the only reason that this operation, the brainchild of local bartenders Eric Quilty and Morgan Schick and popping up on a roughly monthly basis at various local bars in the East Bay's best. Feeling complacent at their day jobs — at San Francisco's Nopa and Piedmont Avenue's Adesso respectively — Schick and Quilty founded Jupiter Olympus with the idea of experimenting with new techniques, ingredients, and ideas, ultimately stretching their and their patrons' limits. Mission accomplished. Previous menus at Acme Bar and Easy Lounge have invoked house-made carrot soda, dry ice smoke-infused tonin water, chili powder as mixer, and many, many other artifacts of the weird and wonderful. Drinking for the sake of drinking is great, sure, but this is something more.

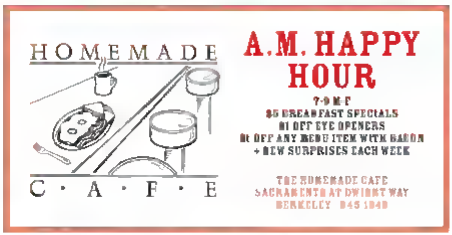
BEST ITALIAN

Pollo al Burro Alla Sostanza at Trattoria Corso

1788 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-8004, TrattoriaCorso.com

It comes out of the kitchen looking like nothing special, but maybe it's more like a sneak attack: a couple chicken breasts largely smothered but for a puddle of melted butter and maybe a sprig of herb served in a simple, cast-iron skillet, not a vegetable or starch or other side in sight. *I could make this at home*, you think for the approximately fifteen







seconds between when you see it and when you take your first bite which is about when any thought of replicating such magic begins to feel embarrassingly hubristic. Unfathomably moist and meaty on the inside with a crackly-crunchy, fatty-delicious layer of crispy skin on the outside (the product of a two-step process, in which the chicken is fried and then roasted) this is the kind of dish you'll find yourself craving days and even weeks later. This is chicken at its perfect platonic best. Side dishes or sauces would just be a distraction.

BEST DIVE

The Kingfish

5227 Claremont Ave., Oakland, 510-655-7373

Oakland may be awash in all manner of dark, dingy, and otherwise dank places to get our collective drink on but don't get it twisted. All dive bars are certainly not created equal. Fortunately, for all of us, the city is home to one of the absolute best, a sort of wonderfully alternative universe where the televised sports never end, the popcorn is bottomless, and time doesn't exist. There's shuffleboard and Buck Hunter in the back room, stiff drinks and impossibly scuffed floors up front, low ceilings and lively company throughout. The Kingfish's building dates back to ninety years, and if all of us are lucky, it'll stay there another ninety, same as it ever was.

MOST OBVIOUS INCLUSION ON THIS LIST

Beer Revolution

464 3rd St., Oakland, 510-452 2337
Beer-Revolution.com

It's a seductive concept, isn't it? Beer Revolution. A revolution about/for/in the name of/powered by beer. Use packed with hops. A tipsy burpy army storming the White House. The formerly mild mannered brewers of America forming a bearded militia, ready to take this country back. The mental images alone are worth the price of admission but Beer Rev is or much more. Namely: forty-some-odd beers on tap, more than are hundred in coolers lined up against the wall, and not a Coors in sight. That is, of course, when local hop-heads go to geek out over brewing techniques and limited-edition beers and notes of caramel and cola where reading all the massive chalkboard menu has swiftly become the closest thing many secular Oaklanders have to a Hail Mary, where amateurs and experts alike are eagerly guided through the massive selection by a sage and sample-happy bar staff and where happy locals gather at all hours of the day to share a beer and soak up the sun on the bar's endlessly pleasant front patio. But it's also a place where beer — long overlooked as a craft product — has been elevated to an art form. It is, well, revolutionary.

BEST BLOODY MARY

Chop Bar

247 4th St. #111, Oakland, 510-834 2467
OaklandChopBar.com

Here's this for science in the public interest. In a 2011 presentation to the American Chemical Society, Neil Da Costa — apparently an actually reputable scientist — asserted that the Bloody Mary is the most complex cocktail in the world containing literally hundreds of flavor compounds. That's a lot to screw up but Chop Bar's got it down to, well, a science.

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST JUKEBOX AT A BAR CONT'D

Laurel Lounge
More R. Kelly than I know what to do with! — *jschnee4*

The Oraknois
A good jukebox is a dying art form. — *dto340*

BEST LOCALLY SOURCE/ORGANIC MENU

Chez Panisse
Sorry trendy upstarts. Alice and her chefs still have it going on all these years later. Talk about revolutionary — Alice Waters deserves some deep props in this category — *poppyinsky*

Gather
Ask for the sourcebook to learn how far each food item has travelled and what each supplier is doing for the community and the earth — *Ramos-Cohen*

BEST MEXICAN OR CENTRAL AMERICAN RESTAURANT

Garde Tacqueria
Hits the spot when you're way too hungry for sure. Love the tacos! — *Sauna Hawley*

Juan's Place
Tradition holds — *Alden Mudge*

Picante
Not really Mexican but Berkeley Mex. Fast, good food, friendly people — *Pamela Norton*

BEST MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANT

Gopher's
Just under the BART tracks on lower Solano. This place has the best hummus ever. Tiny, lovely — *Seana Hawley*

Sunrise Deli
They make falafel the way Ioould is supposed to be! — *Lori Ballestyn*

BEST MOBILE FOOD VENDOR

Adam's Rib Truck
The Kalbar sandwich at the Cannabis Cup rocked my world. — *storm*

PIST OR PLEIURE
Mobile pizza — James' stories are just as good as the pizza. Inventor of the smorgasone. And he's hella Oakland. — *Gopal Dayaneni*

Jon & Dave's Eats
I think his truck was stolen (— *Hollie Hardy*

Tom Tamale
Serving love and lard all over Oakland and the greater Bay Area. — *Tom Ramos*

BEST PIZZA

Arizmendi
It's the flavor and the crust! — *Tiyuja Locke*

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST PIZZA CONT'D

Noonan Fifty Pizza, Emeryville

Lunch-splatter gets all the attention, but this place is incredible. A salumi pizza of the day — really special. — *Lisa Feldman*

Zachary's

I know it is old school, not hip, and there are lots of great others, but I love their deep dish and dream of it in the midst of deep meditation retreats. — *andrea thiele*

Often when slightly off (even they are sometimes not fully up to par) their deep dish pizzas are still heaven on a plate (though probably also a heart attack on a plate, but what a great way to diet!) Nothing beats their deep dish pesto pizza. — *Claudia Dobos*

BEST SANDWICHES

Genova

But don't pronounce it like it is spelled ... It's "GEN-o-A." If you forget, don't worry, someone will make you feel like an idiot when you pronounce it "Gen-o-va." — *Dana Buchanan*

Grocery

Montclair's very own "Sandwich Noir" (ditch your cell phone) grinds out your dream sandwich(es) daily. — *Carol Lovegrove*

Stella Rossa Bon Lunches

Outrageously good and very consistent in their outrageousness. — *bells & whistles*

The Drunkroom

VEGAN SLOPPY JOE! — *zoeey66*

BEST SOUTHERN/SOUL FOOD

Souley Vegan

The best!!! Oh my god it's so good. — *Chris Voss*

BEST TACO TRUCK

I've not tried

— *Pedinoff Rebecca*

Jalisciencia 2

The taco truck by the Coliseum and the East Bay SPCA (Hegenberger and Baldwin, maybe). I think it's called Jalisciencia. As far as I know, that's not actually a word in Spanish, so I'm not too sure about the name, but they have THE BEST FISH TACOS EVER!!!! — *Courtney Supple*

Tacos Sinaloa

Three street tacos that are crispy delicious and a soda for under five bucks?! WHAATTT! — *Nikki Muracciti*

BEST TRAI/LAO/BURMESE RESTAURANT

Burma Superstar

Just trust me on this. — *Carol Lovegrove*

The Jack London brasserie's version is made with Rain organic vodka, a proprietary house-made well-spiced Bloody Mary mix that we'd happily trade our firstborn for, and, if you want, bacon (!!) for $2. It comes out nicely thick and perfectly brick-colored, adorned with colorful, freshly pickled vegetables in a tall glass dusted with salt, pepper and spices. It's perfect before you even take the first sip. And then it's salty, spicy, sweet, and savory all at once, beautifully textured and perfectly balanced, all those hundreds of compounds causing your taste buds to explode and your synapses to fire on levels you scarcely even understand. But why would you want to?

BEST FAST FOOD FOR THE ALLERGIC

Nature's Express

1823 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-527 5831
Natures Express.com

Let's face it. Everyone wants to stuff their face with fast food sometimes. But we don't want to feel like crap afterward. And that's when you drive/bike/bus/walk/crawl to North Berkeley for Nature's Express. Not only are all its offerings completely vegan, but the place also has special menus for the soy- wheat / gluten - and nut-sensitive. In this case vegan doesn't just mean glutinous meat substitutes. Its classic reward "burger" (lentil patty) is delicious, flavorful, and hearty and, when wrapped in a lettuce leaf instead of bread, makes you feel virtuous. Tack on an order of baked sweet potato fries (if you're lucky. They sell out routinely during lunchtime) and a $5 Day smoothie (kale cucumber beet celery apple juice banana and strawberries), and you'll get an injection of post lunch energy, not sluggishness. Your body will thank you. And then you can order a gluten free brownie.

MOST OVERLOOKED AFFORDABLE BRUNCH SPOT

Cactus Taqueria

5642 College Ave., Oakland, 510-658-8140; 1881 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-528 1881
CactusTaqueria.com

The affordably priced and healthy-minded Cactus Taqueria already deserves an award for maintaining the sanity of Oakland and Berkeley parents, but it's also got another hidden value: its weekend brunch. If you don't notice the laminated menu taped to the front door, you might never know such delicacies existed. Which would be a shame because not only are the items — the usual suspects: *huevos rancheros, chilaquiles, huevos divorciados*, breakfast burritos — pretty good and served in generous portions, they're also ridiculously cheap. (The most expensive item is $5.50.) In an area where brunch for two can easily run up a tab of $30 or more, Cactus appears to operate more like a public service than a business — for which our wallets and stomachs are grateful.

BEST AFTER-HOURS GRUB

Tacos Mi Rancho

1434 1st Ave., Oakland, 510-395-1403

It's 1:45 a.m., you've just stumbled out of the bar, and you're hungry. But where to eat? Despite the many valiant efforts to serve food late at night in Oakland, there's still a dearth of options past last call. That's when you scrounge for change and head to Tacos Mi Rancho — open till 2:30 a.m. Sunday through Thursday,







Basil russian to stay-cool. Thu Tuppe at a patio. Chris Duffey

and till 3 a.m. on the weekend. Not surprisingly this taco truck — parked on a tiny triangular block across from Lake Merritt — sees plenty of action, but service is fairly swift even when it's busy. (A security guard keeps everyone in check.) The tacos are pretty tasty even when you're sober but if you're a little antsy, they'll be extra amazing — especially with those fiery pickled carrots as garnish. And, did we mention? They're only a buck twenty-five each!

BEST REASON TO DAY DRINK

The Trappist's patio

460 8th St. Oakland, 510-238 8900, TheTrappist.com

Housed in an unaccountably charming 19th century Victorian, managed by the best bar staff in Oakland and offering some 25 Belgian beers on tap, The Trappist was already one of the East Bay's destination bars and that was before it threw down the trump card: a gorgeous, picnic-table bedecked, dog friendly back patio, nestled between the bar's back brick wall and a (unobtrusive) fence like everyone's secret hideout, laid out right under that big Bay Area sky sun at stare included. Actually come to think of it, this place is also a great reason to drink at night too

BEST ADDITION TO THE BERKELEY DRUNKOSPHERE

Freehouse

2700 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-647 2306, BerkeleyFreehouse.com

The intersection at College Avenue and Bancroft Way is most notably home to Caffe Strada. Just spitting distance from campus, it's the epicenter of caffeine-fueled conversation. But, until recently, there was something missing from this corner — namely Freehouse, a chic-yet understated venue for a different kind of social lubricant: booze. With a full liquor selection, friendly bartenders, and tasty food, Freehouse is easily the best new addition to the UC Berkeley drunkosphere, providing a place for both enthused undergrads and other members of the campus community to unwind, chat it up, and get a little rowdy. Comfortably occupying the old space of Adega, Freehouse has the charm of a dimly lit downtown joint far from the usual orbit of inebriated college kids. Its cocktails are affordable, its selection of local beers ample, and its basket of French fries always hits the spot for early-evening munchies. If everything you could want from a college bar

BEST ARCADE/ GAMING BAR

Vitus

201 Broadway Oakland, 510-452 1820, VitusOakland.com

When Vitus opened last year its place in Oakland's ballooning bar scene was not yet clear. What it has turned out to be is not only a place to drink and hear music, but a great place to play games. Its well-stocked arcade features AC/DC and medieval-themed pinball machines, among others. Amateur gamers and wizened pinball elites scrap and shit-talk all night (and especially during Vitus' bimonthly pinball tournaments) as the machines ring away, racking up points and high scores. But Vitus' most exciting arcade game is its skee-ball, which you can occasionally play for free. In addition to this festive environment brought on by the games, the bar has a full bar including a trusty supply of Linden Street beer. There's lots of space to gather so whether you're there for music or just drinks, it's also a great place to game.

BEST BOARD GAMING BAR

The Albatross

1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-2473, AlbatrossPub.com

Without a doubt, The Albatross is the best place for drunken board-gaming in the East Bay. Not only does it have the popular ones (Taboo, Apples to Apples, etc.) but it's also stocked with a whole bunch of table-top pastimes that you probably haven't seen since you were a kid. Connect Four is a sure crowd-pleaser for competitive gamers, but boozers can also head over a round of pool. Cluttered with chairs, tables, and friendly faces, The Albatross is a jigsaw of silliness, the kind of place where you'll always meet a fun character or two. The bar usually has a good microbrew on tap, and its calendar is sprinkled with jazz and blues bands. And while technically not a board game, darts makes The Albatross stand out most from other bars: A handful of boards, each adorned with a chalkboard in its own cubicle, line the side wall of the bar's larger back room. Like horseshoes or bocce ball, darts is a game that forces socialization, deepens conversation and allows for competition and contemplation at the same time.

BEST LATE NIGHT HAPPY HOUR

Kansai

4345 Telegraph Ave., Oakland 510-658 7273

Let's face it. Late-night grub, usually pursued out of desperation, can get gross. Not

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST VEGETARIAN/VEGAN RESTAURANT

Amita's Cafe

Amita has amazing Sri Lankan daily lunch specials — both meat and vegetarian. She shops for her ingredients locally and supports local businesses such as Semifreddi's and Ikeyin Coffee. Great quiet spot for Downtown Oakland! And she's so sweet. — *Natalie Bate Tufano*

Central Vegetarian Alameda

This jewel of a restaurant prepares vegan Vietnamese dishes that are superb, unique and wonderful. — *Rich Sussman*

Sunday Vegan

Lima out the door while the hamburger joint next door is empty. Only in Oakland! — *Tom Holub*

BEST VIETNAMESE/CAMBODIAN RESTAURANT

Butterscotch

[illegible] will like you places you've never been. — A *Klingensmith*

Chicago Garden

Rice ball salad as to die for. — *Lily Chen-Dunn*

MOST COURAGEOUS CHEFS

Are you kidding me?

Cooking, doesn't take courage, it takes hard work and creativity. Stop putting those people on a pedestal and enjoy their delicious food. — *poquimuska*

Chez Barnabais at Diner Volante

The man fears nothing. — *mcoy66*

John Marchese

For leaving Mun and opening a sausage place [Telegraph]. — *Joe Blackman*

Tanya Holland

For opening B-Side BBQ as a sketchy section of San Pablo... — *John Allenby*

MOST CREATIVE DRINKS

Bishop Tokay Club – Albany

There are some amazing things happening in here. — *Matthew Fuber LaPlace*

Hudson

Alex Conde's a stud. — *Tom Holub*

The Grand Tavern

The Louisville Lunn was created in-house — amazing cocktail with bacon-infused bourbon and a splash of pineapple. Decadent. — *Estephanie Verde*

MOST SUBVERSIVE USE OF FOOD/DIETS

Cinnabelle

Vegan? Really? — *Chris Voss*

Father

Root to shoot, vomit to trotters — *Kathryn Cohen*

What?

— *Mike Ortega*

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TUESDAY - Trivia Tuesday
You bring the brains, we'll bring the beers. Brainstormer's Pub Quiz begins at 7pm.

WEDNESDAY - Web Wednesday
Follow us on Twitter or "like" us on Facebook to receive an extra, rotating promotion.

THURSDAY - Thirsty Thursday
Any pitcher and any pizza for $20. From 4:00pm close.

FRIDAY - Frequent Filler Friday
Pre-purchase 6 growler refills for the price of 5. All day.

SATURDAY - Spare The Air Saturday
Show that you didn't drive to the Alehouse by flashing your BART pass, bike helmet, AC Transit ticket, skateboard, etc. and get 10% off your entire food purchase. All day.

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At 4 pm (when samples for those over 21. No reservation required. Purchase or volunteer a Pyramid beer and we'll pay the sales tax on any to-go or refill. Bear you can fit in it.
Limit one promotion per table; weekly promotions cannot be combined with other promotions or discounts.

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Categories We Didn't Think Of

BEST SLIDERS
Phil's Sisters
— Jennifer Levy Wendt

BEST MOBILE FOOD POD
Off the Grid: Broadway
Oakland's first recurring pod, with several trucks and family fun. BitesOffBroadway.com *— Karen Hester*

BEST CAFÉ
Cafe Zoe
— Joy MacKay
Awaken
— Jim Thrields

BEST KID-FRIENDLY RESTAURANT
Chevys Taqueria
— Jessie Seyfer

BEST MEATBALLS
Lion Dining Bellagio
They are *molto bene*. *— Naomi Alpert*

BEST PLACE TO GET A DRUNK JESSIE
Rudy's Can't Fail Cafe
— Greg Keidan

BEST SEAFOOD BEST DINING EXPERIENCE
Marina restaurant
— Brittney Wendell

BEST BEER BAR
Craft beer is hip, in this city and there are more and more bars dedicating their menus to beer. Beer bars and other bars are vastly different and they deserve a separate category. *— Kelsey Williams*

so when it comes to Kansai. This Japanese restaurant has been serving up sushi until 2 a.m. for years now, offering Temescal residents and bar hoppers a white-napkin option after a long night of doing whatever. A decent portion of its menu is discounted during its happy hour (which starts at 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays) with fusion and sake bombs helping the night continue. Tempura rolls, spicy hand rolls and classic California rolls can be had for just a few bucks — it's often the perfect end to a long rambling evening. It's not just a late-night place, either: drop by in the afternoon for an equally satisfying sushi spread. Though you can get away with round after round of sake bombs, Kansai also has a friendly feel, so don't stress about bringing kids along.

BEST LATE NIGHT KOREAN

Kang Tong Degi

3702 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-658-2998

A little-known gem near the corner of 37th and Telegraph, this Korean restaurant is a boon for late-night fiascos. Inside the surprisingly long, bamboo-accented room, the walls of which are plastered with Korean-character-bedecked wallpaper, a jukebox blasts Korean pop music, and the friendly extremely accommodating staff makes for a celebratory and always-intoxicating experience. Ask your waitress for recommendations on the best seafood, the tastiest barbecued meats, and the most savory noodle dishes. Then make sure to order a bottle of soju to help wash down all those little side dishes, or *banchan* that come with each meal. If you come late at night with a big group, sit at the long communal table — dishes are served mostly family-style, and if you bring someone who knows what they're doing, you'll find yourself confronted with mountains of food. Kang Tong Degi is open for regular dinner hours too, but the party tends to really get going after 11.

BEST CAFÉ

Actual Cafe

6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, 510-652-8386, ActualCafe.com

While it's certainly nothing new for a cafe to serve as a makeshift community gathering space on top of serving up the usual coffee and pastry fare, it's fair to say that when it comes to being a community-oriented caffeine dispensary, Actual Cafe takes the cake. Owner Sal Bedoura keeps the cafe consistently abuzz with a hefty offering of interesting events, including live music features, and the ever-popular Thursday-evening Bicycle Bingo games (which raise funds for local nonprofits). Plus, each month a local artist is invited to display his or her work on its walls. The above would be laudable on its own, but there's more: Aside from the usual selection of scones, coffee drinks and cold turkey sandwiches found on the menu of many cafes, Actual also serves wine, a solid selection of local beers and absolutely tasty treats like house-made granola and flaky empanadas stuffed with savory fillings like chard and pine nuts. On almost any night, patrons can grab a drink, bake a spot and bask in a showcase of decidedly East Bay culture.

BEST SOUTHERN BREAKFAST SERVED WITH A SMILE

Aunt Mary's Cafe

4307 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-601-9227, AuntMarysCafe.com

Named after the chef/owner's aunt, Aunt Mary's cafe has become a staple in the Temescal neighborhood with lines out the door on weekends. Not only do its largely sustainably sourced dishes boast fresh ingredients — like the Southern frittole and Spinach, a potato-and-Southern greens cake served with pot likker gravy and a homemade biscuit — but the service is friendly and without a hint of attitude. The menu draws from Southern and Southwestern influences for its comfort food, with dishes that are out-of-this-world delicious and smack of that home-cooked stomach-warming joy you thought you could only find in your relatives' kitchens. In the inevitable case that you have to wait to get your savory corn pancakes with red eye gravy, Cajun-style French toast in a whiskey custard, or biscuits with sage gravy, relax in one of the comfortable armchairs in the waiting area while drooling over strawberry pie in the display case. There are more than enough items on the menu to keep you coming back. ●

SPORTS & LEISURE

REVOLUTION

THE EAST BAY 2012



Best quick workout hike: Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve — Chris Duffey

BEST TRAIL HIKE

Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve

Trail begins on Stonewall Rd., Berkeley, EBParks.org/parks/claremont_canyon

Most of us have the best intentions when it comes to exercise: We know we should do it, and we even want to do it but finding the time is another matter. If you've got 30 to 45 minutes and you're prepared to sweat, head for the hills behind the Claremont Hotel for a quick hike that'll seriously work your legs and glutes. The 7.5-mile Stonewall-Panoramic Trail begins midway up Stonewall Drive and leads to an immediate steep incline up the hill. When you're huffing and puffing at the first clearing of eucalyptus trees, you'll be rewarded with a glorious view of Oakland and Berkeley, the bay, and the Golden Gate Bridge. If you've got it in you, keep going to the ridgetop where the view is totally unobstructed and panoramic. You can get back down the hill in a jiffy and when you see the ridgetop from afar, you can proudly know you just conquered it in less time than it takes to watch a TV show.

BEST WAY TO SPEND A SUNNY SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Mossball at Mosswood Park

MacArthur Blvd. and Broadway, Oakland, Sundays at 2:30 p.m., Twitter.com/Mossball

Summer in the Bay Area is, as we all know, often more of a two-sweaters-and-cloud-cover affair than a cut-offs-and-sunshine situation, but on those few days when the fog burns off early and the actually feels like California, there's no better way to kill a couple hours than with Mossball, a loose conglomeration of friends and strangers who gather in Mosswood Park every Sunday for pickup softball. Depending on who shows up, games can be totally laid-back or surprisingly competitive — or much more commonly, somewhere in between — and seeing what happens is all part of the fun. Bring a glove and your game face.

BEST APOCALYPSE STYLE WORKOUT

CrossFit Oakland

1313 67th St., Emeryville, 510-985-9210, CrossFitOakland.com

The closest you're likely to get to apocalyptic conditions is Tough Mudder, a twelve-mile obstacle course that involves plummeting into ice water, crawling through mud pits and barbed wire, and surviving electric shock. CrossFit Oakland gets you prepped for the grueling course with high-intensity workouts of the day (or "WODs") and a new special Sunday Tough Mudder training session. The WODs will have you heaving twenty-pound balls against a wall, working against your body weight in ring pull ups, and attempting a number of other challenging real-life movements to get you ready to scale twelve-foot walls and traverse greased monkey bars on the Tough Mudder course. But it's the running training with Aaron Castillo on Sundays that gives you a competitive edge. Castillo, a member of CrossFit Oakland himself, will help competitors tweak their running technique and build up the endurance necessary to complete the course, so running correctly becomes second nature and the focus can remain on the obstacles. CrossFit Oakland will have you smoking the competition at Tough Mudder, and ensure you'll have the stamina to outlast the other survivors when the apocalypse finally rolls around.

BEST RUN

Along the Jack London Square Waterfront

BayTrail.ABAG.ca.gov

Lake Merritt is popular for a reason, but this is the literal road less traveled: a mile or so of well paved off-street bike and running path running along the marina from the ferry station



Readers Poll Winners

BEST ATHLETE
Dark Sheik and Tim Thompson (tie)

BEST BASKETBALL COURTS
Mosswood Park

BEST BIKE RIDE
Bay Trail

BEST BOOT CAMP
Proaction Athletics

BEST ENDURANCE CHALLENGE
Oakland Running Festival

BEST FITNESS INSTRUCTOR
Sarah McClendon, Proaction Athletics

BEST GROUP ACTIVITY
East Bay Bike Party

BEST MARTIAL ARTS STUDIO
Sugetsukan

BEST OPTIONS AT A GYM
Gold's Gym

BEST PARK
Tilden Park

BEST PILATES STUDIO
InnerStellar Pilates and Yoga

BEST PLACE FOR WATER SPORTS
The Bay

BEST PLACE TO PLAY BOARD GAMES
The Albatross Pub

BEST PLACE TO RUB
Lake Merritt

BEST POOL HALL
Thalasse

BEST SPONTANEOUS SPORTS

GATHERING
4 Square of the East Bay

BEST SPORTING GOODS STORE
REI

BEST SPORTS TEAM
Oakland Athletics

BEST SUMMER CAMP
Sarah's Science Camps

BEST TENNIS COURTS
Davie Tennis Stadium

BEST YOGA STUDIO
Flying Yoga Shala

BEST YOGA TEACHER
Tim Thompson, Monkey Yoga Shala

MOST SUBVERSIVE EXERCISE ROUTINE
Ripton

to Estuary Park. The loop is a great quick run, or you can continue along the Bay Trail in either direction for as long as you want. Either way, start at the east end, which'll talk you past soccer games and ballboats and through Jack London Square, all with a perfect view of the Port of Oakland's famed cranes. Ben and Jerry's is right there too, just sayin.

BEST OLYMPIC FEMALE ATHLETE TO WATCH

Dana Vollmer

Some experts think that very few world records will be broken in swimming at this year's Summer Olympics in London because athletes are no longer allowed to wear high tech swimsuits. But Dana Vollmer a UC Berkeley grad who still trains at Cal may prove them wrong. Which is amazing, considering that Vollmer underwent heart surgery in 2009 to correct a rare disorder that caused her heart to beat 240 times per minute. For years, coaches kept a defibrillator at poolside while she raced. Then after just missing the 2008 US Olympic team Vollmer embarked on a relentless training regimen. And next week, when the Games begin she'll be the gold medal favorite in the 100-meter butterfly and is expected to pick up two more golds in the 400-meter medley and 800-meter freestyle relays. The women with the ballyhoo she could become the first female swimmer to break a world record in the post high tech-suit era.

BEST OLYMPIC MALE ATHLETE TO WATCH

Anthony Ervin

A dozen years ago Anthony Ervin was a rising star in the swimming world. The young Berkeley student was the first swimmer of African American heritage to make the US Olympic team — he's also part Native American and Jewish. And then he won a gold medal in the 50-meter freestyle at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. He captured two more golds at the World Championships a year later. But then in 2003 at the age of 22, he dropped out of school and out of swimming. The world-class-athlete-turned-hipster took up smoking, covered his arms in tattoos, played guitar and traveled the country, searching for meaning in his life. He even auctioned off his Olympic medal on eBay to aid the victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. But eventually he came back to the East Bay, reenrolled at Cal and got his degree in 2010. He also started coaching underprivileged kids at Oakland Undercurrent Swim Team. In January 2011 he returned to competitive swimming, and just eighteen months later he's a favorite to return to the Olympic medal podium in swimming's marquee event — the 50 free.



BEST SPORTS COACH

Teri McKeever

Although female coaches broke through the glass ceiling years ago in basketball and other collegiate sports US Olympic swimming has been stuck in the 1950s. But not any longer thanks to UC Berkeley swim coach Teri McKeever. This year after leading Cal to three NCAA championships in four years, she was named the first-ever female head coach of the women's US Olympic swimming team. We know it's 2012 and that's ridiculous. Nonetheless McKeever's achievement is noteworthy. Moreover her team could be one of the best ever assembled. Its stars include butterfly ace Dana Vollmer (one of McKeever's disciples) breaststroke demon Rebecca Soni,

and backstroke newcomer Missy Franklin. Even East Bay resident Natalie Coughlin, an eleven time Olympic medalist who has been coached by McKeever for more than a decade will be in London for at least one relay, swim as she attempts to become the most decorated female athlete in US Olympic history.

BEST FAMILY BIKE RIDE

Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail

EBparks.org/parks/trails/lafayette_moraga

Owned and operated by the East Bay Regional Park District, this paved trail is perfect on days when it's cold and foggy in Oakland and Berkeley. It's almost always sunny on the east side of the hills, although it can be too hot on summer days when there's no marine layer in the Bay Area. The trail starts near the Lafayette BART station at Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard. If you drive, arrive before 11 a.m., because the parking lots fill up. It starts out as a flat trail through a forested section of Lafayette — making it an easy — and beautiful — ride for young cyclists. The trail runs through neighborhoods and behind homes as it winds toward Moraga. If you have young kids and own trailer bikes, it's a good idea to bring them along so that your kids can hop on them when the trail heads uphill, past St. Mary's College. On warm days, bring the kids' swimsuits, too, so they can run through a water sprinkler and cool off at Moraga Commons Park, before heading back down the hill.

BEST PUBLIC TENNIS COURTS

San Pablo Park

2800 Park St., Berkeley CI Berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=12844

On a sunny weekend afternoon in the East Bay, there's nothing better than playing a game of tennis. But finding an open court — one that isn't neglected, cracked or covered in debris — can be challenging, resulting in a frustrating drive all over town as daylight slips away. But in a little-known (to outsiders) park in West Berkeley, there's a tennis player's paradise... six courts — newly surfaced with lights (!) and a large backboard — which are rarely full. A lot of money has gone into upgrading San Pablo Park in recent years, and it's quite the multi-purpose neighborhood hotspot: its basketball courts just reopened after a half-million-dollar renovation. The tennis courts sometimes hold tournaments and attract some serious players, but rookies hit the courts too — and thankfully, two of them are fenced in for those who tend to hit errant balls. After discovering these immaculate courts, you won't want to go anyplace else — and you won't need to, either.

BEST PLACE TO CHANNEL YOUR INNER CHARLES BUKOWSKI

Golden Gate Fields

1100 Eastshore Hwy., Berkeley, 510-559-7300, GoldenGateFields.com

How many places are there in the East Bay where salty sorts can comfortably sip alcoholic beverages, puff on cigarettes and bet on horse races without fear of retribution from sweaty haters of all things fun? It turns out there's just one. Golden Gate Fields. A

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST ATHLETE

Ciona Spira Youth Troupe (ages 8-14)

These kids can do more real pull ups than anyone. — *Victoria Angelis*

DARK Shark

Hoodsians twice dead. Persian warrior, truly the total package. — *Sam Rumbaugh-Bell*

Sage O'Connal

Has fixed gear freestyle web edit as blowin' up. — *jim smith*

BEST BASKETBALL COURTS

San Pablo Park

The new courts are incredible! Last night every court was occupied... even with basketball playing, unicyclists. — *Timar Carlone*

BEST BIKE RIDE

San Pablo Avenue, from start to finish

You'll travel through grits and glitzy neighborhoods, and it's mostly flat, though it's still really long. — *Kathryn Levine*

BEST BOOT CAMP

KEB Fitness

Zombie Survival Boot Camp?!? Come on! — *anacy66*

BEST MARTIAL ARTS STUDIO

Solgetsdone

Collectively run nonprofit 100-percent sliding scale Hemin of Girl Army and Kids classes that are NOT based on punishment. Instructors support efforts in schools (sex ed, consent, and self defense), work with visually impaired and more. Macho behavior is not tolerated. — *Gopal Dayanent*

BEST OPTIONS AT A GYM

YMCA

I LOVE the Y! You get a real community feel here. It's not a meat market! I get a full gym yoga, pilates, spin, boot camp and swimming. This place has it all! — *Bianca Fordam*

BEST PARK

Rowland Park

Hidden gem. It's a tragedy what Oakland is going to allow the Zoo to do, building a shitwell office building right on top of the last pristine views and plant and animal communities in the west facing hills. — *Bay West*

Point Isabel (Dog Park) in Richmond

Every dog, and I use knows this park. Not only does it give you and your dog a good workout to walk the trail but it is also beautiful to be right at the water and looking at the Golden Gate Bridge. — *Kirstin*

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East Bay Regional Park District
www.ebparks.org



Tilden Nature Area
(North End of Central Park Drive)
Berkeley, CA 94708

Thank you for voting us Best of the East Bay 2011 for "Best Park" by both the Editor's Pick and the Reader's Poll Pick and "Best Deal for Family Fun"



Photo by Eric Arnold

venue beloved by anyone and everyone who values the more illicit trappings of a bygone era (a time when booze and cigarettes went hand in hand and spending an entire day at the track was a perfectly acceptable way to spend a Sunday) the track hosts live and simulcast races throughout the week and attracts everyone from fresh-faced families to grizzled veterans. It also features special events regularly, including wiener dog races, Kentucky Derby days, and live music, and every Sunday everything from hot dogs to admission is just one dollar. A little advice for first timers: You'll have an infinitely better time if you place a bet

BEST RETURN TO CHILDHOOD

4 Square of the East Bay

Thursdays at 9 p.m., Rockridge BART station parking lot, 5660 College Ave., Oakland

This may be hard to believe, but before it was an app, Four Square was a REAL THING. And thanks to Sam Meade-Woog and his scrappy crew of players, it's making a comeback. Specifically every Thursday starting at around 9 p.m. at the south end of the Rockridge BART station parking lot, where, for the last few years, a completely adhoc group of anywhere between ten and thirty people have been meeting up for a lively-but-low-pressure game of the playground classic. It's elementary school without the threat of pongies, a way to get out of the house and meet people without having to resort to the bar scene, a mildly athletic experience without you know the actual bother of breaking a sweat. And don't worry if you can't remember the rules. Meade-Woog and everyone else will be happy to teach you.

BEST GROUP BIKE RIDE FOR THE FUN

East Bay Bike Party

EastBayBikeParty.wordpress.com

So you say you want to start a revolution? Then steer clear of the East Bay Bike Party. Unlike Critical Mass, for which its sometimes mistaken by onlookers, this group ride through the streets of the East Bay every second Friday is strictly politics-free. It isn't designed to make any statements, break any rules, or polarize participants. In fact organizers exhort riders repeatedly to follow traffic laws, stick to the right-hand lane, and be respectful of pedestrians and motorists — even when East Bay Bike Party a hundreds of bicyclists easily outnumber everyone else on the road. Routes vary from month to month but tend to be mostly flat and about ten miles long, keeping with the good times vibes, each ride is themed (e.g. Pajama Party, Where's Waldo Zombie Homecoming) and concludes with a party hosted by a local business or venue. Activism has its place, but here Joy prevails.

BEST PLACE TO WATCH THE FIGHT

East Bay Rats Motorcycle Club

3025 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, EastBayRats.com

While it isn't necessarily the best place to catch Mayweather-Pacquiao (If that long-anticipated brawl ever happens) this local haunt might be the best place to catch an authentic smoker. No, it's not an actual boxing gym. You won't see any future welterweight champs punching Everlast bags, or hopping about in drawstring shorts. But you will get the highly entertaining spectacle of amateurs duking it out in a ring surrounded by crowds of surly drunk people. About a year ago the Rats began hosting themed fight nights in which members of different scenes bludgeoned each other. The most famous, of course, was a punks-versus-hipsters battle royale, but they've brought of less obvious ones, too: librarians versus illiterate farmers versus adult babies, clowns versus mimes. Such blood sport isn't for the faint of heart, but it's certainly a large draw in Oakland. And if you prefer the sanitized TV version, East Bay Rats occasionally screens the UFC bouts too.

BEST URBAN BIRD WATCHING

Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline

7001 Edgewater Dr. Oakland. 510-562-1373, EBParks.org/parks/martinlking

Of course one of the Bay Area's best bird watching spots would be nestled squarely between the Oakland Airport and the Oakland Coliseum with Highway 880 running alongside. Of course thousands of migrating birds should be able to find their way to a single fifty-acre marsh set amidst an unforgiving industrial tableau year after year. Who are we to question the ways of nature? In 1998 the Port of Oakland (from which the East Bay Regional Park District leases the land today) restored these rich San Leandro Bay wetlands by letting the tides back in and ever since, various organizations have worked to reestablish native plants and a functioning ecosystem. Migratory birds have appreciated the effort, and today the park's fifty-acre Arrowhead Marsh is a major stopover on the Pacific Flyway. Add to that the dozens of local species that make their home here and you've got a birder's paradise with incredibly easy access.

MOST EGALITARIAN TRAILS

Joaquin Miller Park

3450 Joaquin Miller Rd., Oakland, 510-238-7275, OaklandNet.com/joaquinmillerpark

Most regular users of the East Bay's myriad

Readers Say the Darndest Things

BEST PLACE FOR WATER SPORTS

Oakland "Estuary"

If you can get over the filth floating on the surface of the water you know, sundeck, plastic bags, bottles... that stuff. — *Dana Bushouse*

BEST PLACE TO PLAY BOARD GAMES

The Network

Floor-to-ceiling bookshelf of board games, before or after a great locally sourced meal. — *Carol Lonergan*

Lasoup Bar

I never do it but there's definitely some grown men playing Dungeons and Dragons whenever I go by. — *Sam Ghandaghabadi*

BEST PLACE TO RUN

Alameda Naval Base

Almost no dogs, all flat, plenty of space. — *Sam Khandaghabadi*

Manabria Parkway

Way less crowded than running around the lake! — *Kayana Tanouye*

BEST YOGA TEACHER

Leah Gilliman from Barefoot Movement Yoga and YMCA

Amazing instructor. I make sure I come to her class every week. She remembers everyone's name, pushes people to their limits, and is incredibly attentive, patient and hands-on. She was born to do this. Nobody compares to her! — *Monica Purdum*

Bay Yokel, Monkey Yoga Shala, Oakland

Pure inspiration, great corrections, slightly dirty humor. Love that. — *Iolanna*

MOST SUBVERSIVE EXERCISE ROUTINE

Dumbarton Class at Kinetic Art Center

I took the beginner class at 50 years of age! It was epic. I have never been so flexible of my life! — *Violaine Hamel*

Dancing Under the Stars

Jack London Square, Friday Nights. — *Julie Allenby*

Lawn Bowling with Beer at the Oakland Lawn Bowling Club by Lake Merritt

The young folks are moving in and taking over the club from the old folks. — *Hollie Hardy*

city, regional, and state parks have at least an inkling of the eternal power struggle that accompanies trail-access restrictions. Some trails exclude bikes. Some ban dogs. Some ban horses. Some are for hikers and walkers only. And others have no rules whatsoever. No matter the situation, someone usually feels slighted. Even picturesque, wooded Joaquin Miller Park, owned by the City of Oakland and set on a hill slope below popular Redwood Regional Park, can't overcome human nature — but it does get closer to trail-sharing utopia than any other. Hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, runners, and stroller-pushing parents somehow manage to enjoy the park's multi-use wide and narrow trails without trampling all over each others' space. And the park's culture of tolerance means that even when minor transgressions occur, they're usually forgiven in the name of the great outdoors. Sometimes it's just that easy.

BEST NEW SPORTS VENUE

Western Alameda County League: Foothill Division

Playing against someone who is not very competitive is a recipe for boredom or sadism. The local high school scene recognized this fact, and blew up the two most high profile leagues to end the 2011-2012 school year. The Alameda Contra Costa Athletic League (ACCAL) has hosted Berkeley High for years but it hasn't been much of a competition. The Yellow Jackets win in nearly every sport in nearly every season and have been able to treat league play like practice: enjoying a victory lap the minute the first whistle is blown — partly as a result of the school being twice the size of most of its opponents, but mostly a result of its ability to build quality while its rivals implode. To restore balance the Berkeley teams are now part of a new league — the Western Alameda County League: Foothill Division. When the coin is tossed this fall Encinal (Alameda) Bishop O'Dowd (Oakland) San Leandro, Hayward, and Castro Valley will be Berkeley's new neighbors, meaning that while the Red and Gold may not be able to sweep through its league, it may get something more important — a good game.

BEST NEW ATHLETE

Brandon McCarthy

Brandon McCarthy may have seemed like just another Billy Beane reclamation project when he was acquired for a pile of broken bats two seasons ago, but the big pitcher has turned out to be a major reason why the A's are still in the running in a race they should have been out of since Passover. Yet the reason to celebrate McCarthy who is now the Athletics number-one starting pitcher, has more to do with his character than his changeup. The hurler started this year on the cover of *ESPN The Magazine* (along with his equally fetching wife Amanda) in an essay that explored how McCarthy learned to love his inner geek and turn stats into stardom. But even that pales before the standing ovation McCarthy earned for his blast at the loathsome "bias crime" which allegedly entertains fans between innings at some big league ball parks. The bias rant is between inning tomfoolery where the camera finds find a pair of people sitting together and focus in, hoping that they'll kiss or mug for the rest of the audience. The gag that usually ends the focus on random ballpark couples is a zoom on a pair of the visiting team players sitting side-by-side in a dugout. Y'know like they might be a couple, or recall their McCarthy unprompted tweeted that the promotion was "offensive homophobia" and had no place in his heart. And thanks in part to McCarthy's views and those of his owners in Oakland, no place in an A's game either.

BEST NEW ACTIVITY

Yoga to the People

64 Shattuck Sq. and 2036 Bancroft Way, 3rd Fl., Berkeley, 917-573-9842, YogatothePeople.com

If you've never tried yoga before, Yoga to the People is a great place to start. The yoga chain emphasizes an accepting and nonjudgmental environment, and the instructors encourage you to challenge your body in a way that's rigorous but not as harsh as running on a treadmill. Its two locations in downtown Berkeley — one for hot yoga and another for vinyasa — offer sixty-minute classes, with four classes offered per day. At hot yoga, the studio is heated to more than 100 degrees in order to maximize detoxification and intensity and the class focuses on breathing and developing strength, flexibility and balance. Don't worry if you're no yogi: it's open to beginners. The hot vinyasa class, inspired by Ashtanga yoga teacher Bryan Kest, is more intense, with a concentration on body breath, and movement. Best of all since Yoga to the People's classes are donation based — the suggested price is $8-$10 — you can afford to go all day long. ●

Categories We Didn't Think Of

BEST ATHLETIC EVENT
Oakland Marathon
— C.W.

BEST CIRCUS CLASSES
Kinetic Arts Center
It's for the safest and most inspiring place to learn trapeze, rope, tissue, stilts and so much more — anyone who thought they wanted to join the circus but was too afraid to try must try at Kinetic Arts. Another Good for the whole family one. *— Victoria Angelis*

BEST AMPED OUT SUPER-AFFORDABLE SWIMMING POOL, EVER.
San Leandro Family Aquatic Center
— lolume

MOST DEVOLUTIONARY SPORTS TEAM
The Berkeley Revolution
The unicycle basketball national champions, often seen at Strawberry Creek Park in Berkeley are headed to Italy to compete in the world championships, July 23-27. *— Tom Holub*



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EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

ATTRACTIONS

7th Annual Fire & Light: Salsa and Art Oakland With live performances by flamenco artists and members of Oakland, it and Oakland, Cellar Jazz, a limited number of canvas, live artists, and a live auction of Berkeley and Sat., Jul 21 6 11 p.m. $250 The Cruzan | 1 Broadway, Oakland, 510-444-05 8 | the-Cruzan.org.

Berkeley City Club Architectural Tour A docent-led tour of pre-reopening activities Julia Morgan's Mediterranean Gothic "Taj Mahal" Sun., July 22 1–4 p.m. free 510-848-7800 Berkeley-Piedmont Historic Preservation Association, Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-848-7800 BerkeleyCityClub.com

DIY Day With a screenprinting designed with the Kiwa Paper Oakland Collective, a pop-up dining workshop with City Social Farms, and composed education with StoryPirates org. Sun July 22 9 a.m.–2 p.m. free Laney Location Farmers' Market, Workshop and Ambassadors Building **Fridays on the Main** With hot eats, global craft, fashion trends, live music, DJs, and small vendors, and live music. Fridays, 6–8 p.m. Continues through Aug. 31. free Main Street Plaza Main St. Martinez, 925-228-3511 MainStreetMartinez.org.

The Jessica Pennington Story & Press Pass Program With self-guided tour of seven private gardens in Alamo. Sun., July 22 Alamo Center, Oakland and Piedmont to view various sculptures, foliage and more Sun., July 22 10 a.m.–4 p.m. $5 per garden, and 12 and under free. 888-842-2442 JessicaPennington.org.

Annual Bastille Day Celebration With an array of live and discuss on display July 21 12:5 p.m. free Lake Merritt Park Garden Center, 666 Oakland Ave Oakland

OHA Walking Tour "Chinatown Oakland, A Bit of Asia" Learn about the neighborhood's architecture artistry cultural music, changing demographics, and more! Sun. July 22 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 800 and 900 5:30 p.m. Oakland Heritage Alliance, Pacific Renaissance Plaza 388 9th St, Oakland 510-358-9805 ext. 228, PRPOakland.com

OHA Walking Tour "Oakland's Waterfront and Streetcar Village" With a fully 2-mile walk to explore pathways designed to interest farmers to streetcars, schools, stores, and parks, and the Lake Merritt and bike along a former streetcar line. RSVP required. 510-763-8369 Sat. July 21 10 p.m. 12:30 p.m., $20-$25 Oakland Heritage.org.

Rotary Dockwalk With a Shakespeare of all 38 plays to the museum 5 regular Beethoven Opera Dockwalks a picnic and wine prior July 21-22 10 a.m. 5 p.m. $40-$65 Pittsburg-Port-of-the-Beach, 10879 San Pablo Ave El Cerrito, Playland-Port-of-the-Beach.org.

Screen-Printing Demonstration Artists Kendall Kumm and Terry Thomas Read Kendall techniques and discuss the local poems scene with Art of Oly or Novel conversation Sat., July 21, 2:30 p.m., free w/admission Oakland Oakland, at California 1000 Oak St Oakland 510-318-8450 MuseumCA.org.

Sapan Gladiator Series, and Books with Marilyn With a Shakespeare Monkey Business Part of a month-long film series, using the career of Marilyn Monroe. Fe., July 20, 3 p.m. free Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch 2090 Hearst Ave., Berkeley 510-981-6100, TodaysPlayOn.blogspot.org.

Oakland Street Drums With free Oakland live music by Guns Oakland, and a screening of Everyday Sunshine: The Story of Fishbone prepared on the wall of the bank of the West Building (40th Street and Telegraph Avenue, Oakland) Thu., July 19 6:30–7 p.m. free, 415-662-3033, TomorrowStreetArena.com.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FIESTAS

Art Under and Head With art, food and the music under the nursery's oak canopy July 21-22 11 p.m.–4 p.m. free Jubilee Lane Nursery 999 Harbor Ln Lindsborg 925-44 0296 Arte 4 Lane com

Oakland Thursday Night presents Rhythm With live music, food, craft dining, and live performances. Ad activities for children and adults. Thursdays, Continues through Aug 9 free Commons Danielle, Marie and Frederick avenues, Danville, RhythmOnTheVine.com

South Berkeley Oakland, Annual parade **Opening** City Councilperson Max Anderson welcomes the marketto to new neighborhood Oakland by a display performances by The Shotgun Players, the jazz and Ahkam dancing and music with Oakland Alpha Hyannus Tue., July 24 2-6:30 p.m. free South Berkeley Farmers' Market, Adeline and 63rd sts. Berkeley 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org

Sagebrush Festival and Sweet Sale With live music, a Children's town concert, food food, wine and beer from Lagunitas Brewery, and more Go Ralph Avenue, at Bodega Sweet in Crockett. Sun July 22, 11 a.m.–6 p.m., free 510-787-1155, CommunityConcerts.com

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Acupuncture Walk-A nal undoure LAc., MTCM, leads a meditation healing group acupuncture session. Tues provided. Free and third Friday of every month, 12:30-1:30 p.m. 925-939-5338 Namaste Grand Lake 1930 Lakeshore Ave Oakland, 510-832-9642 NamasteOakland.com

Music Back classes Read For ages 35 and up. Mat required for free Louisiana Tuesdays 4-5 p.m. $3 suggested donations South Berkeley Senior Center, 2939 Ellis St., Berkeley, 510-981-5170

Youth Annual Poultry Living Lessons Storytimes by Seniors in Oakland and Oakland, County RSVP Oakland This, July 19 5 a.m. 2 p.m. 510-730-8662, UCRAC.org/VP.html Oakland Zoo, 9111 Golf Links Rd Oakland 510-632-9525 OaklandZoo.org

Safer Soup Workshop Learn cooking how to choose the right tube and cream. Wed., July 25, 6:30–8:30 p.m. free Good Robinson Lakeshore, 3219 Lakeshore Ave Oakland, 510-1 66-2389, GoodWives.com.

KIDS

Art Workshop with Oakland Artists from the Museum of Children's Art Oakland out workshops with different themes each week, Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m., free, Oakland Public Library 81st Ave Annex 1021 81st Ave., Oakland 510-615-5812 OaklandLibrary.org

Bay Area Children's Drawing Presents: Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type A theatre adaptation of Doreen Cronin's Caldecott Honor Book designed to introduce pre-kindergarteners to the theater. Saturdays, Sundays, 10:30 a.m. & 4 p.m. Continues through Aug. 5 $10-$15, 510-796-4432, BACTheater.org, Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Ave. (at Lake Merritt) Oakland 510-238-2259 Fairyland.org

The Ocean Lady With a hands-filled performance for kids ages 3 through 11 Thu July 19 12:30 p.m. free Oakland Public Library, Lakeview Annex 550 E Embarcadero Oakland 510-238-7344, OaklandLibrary.org

Build the panels With an interactive magic show for ages 4 and under. Wed. July 25, 11 a.m. free Oakland Public Library West Oakland Annex 1401 Adeline St., Oakland, 510-238-3263, OaklandLibrary.org

Annual to Be With an assortment of hands-on activities presented by the Chabot Space & Science Center, Tue., July 24 6-8 p.m. free Oakland Public Library Piedmont Avenue 1800 41st St., Oakland 510-594-4011 OaklandLibrary.org

Children's Arts and Crafts With crafts and activities for families at the Marilynn O'Hara Arts & Crafts Center Saturdays, Sundays, 12-2 p.m. Continues through Sept. 2 $6 Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Ave. (at Lake Merritt), Oakland, 510-452-2259 Fairyland.org

Family Sleepover Beach An overnight zoo adventure with crafts and games. Bring your own picnic dinner Ages 5 and up. Sat. July 21 5 p.m. $15-$45 Oakland Zoo, 9711 Golf Links Rd Oakland 510-632-9525 OaklandZoo.org

Ice Cream Social and Annual Walk With a ride to the old soft-harvesting ponds to collect salt to make old-school vanilla ice cream sundaes. Sun. July 22 11 a.m. 1 p.m. $5 Hayward Shoreline Beekeeping Center, 4901 Breakwater Ave Hayward, 510-670-0210

January Walking with Elephant Robinson A hands-on workshop with materials provided to make Robinson necklaces, and readings. Ages 6 and up Sat. July 28 2 p.m. free Oakland Public Library, Brookfield Branch 9255 Edes Ave. Oakland, 510-615-5125 OaklandLibrary.org

Bonsai Tattoos With temporary music: 2018-Bonsai for those with a signed permission slip. E-mail Shkashnaed@OaklandLibrary.org for a form. Sat., July 21, 2-3 p.m. free, Oakland Public Library, Eastmont Branch 1071 81st Ave., Oakland, 510-615-5812 OaklandLibrary.org

PAWS to Read Wherein kids read to friendly canines Wed. July 25 3-4:30 p.m. free, Piedmont Public Library, Lakeview Annex 550 E Embarcadero Oakland 510-238-7344 OaklandLibrary.org

Preschool Performance Series: Unique! Oakland A video shown show for children for July 20 10:11 a.m. $3 Oakland Village Theatre 224 Fruit St., Oakland 925-384-3400 www.ci.Rockville.nh.us.

Puppet Art: Shadow Guinness' pond-Seaside A not-at-themed puppet show for kids ages 3 through 10 Tue. July 24 2 p.m. free Oakland Public Library, Piedmont Branch, 3585 Fruitvale Ave. Oakland, 510-4391444 OaklandLibrary.org

Safar and Oakland and Reading Reasonsstories for ages 6 and up Tue. July 24, 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. $5 per participant, Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland 510-336-7373 ChabotSpace.org.

LGBT

Lesbians of color Oakland Group A drop-in peer group for lesbian women of color to discuss issues in a safe, confidentialize environment. Thursdays, 1-9 p.m. free Pacific Center 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-8283 PacificCenter.org

Transgender Oakland Group An all-inclusive discussion group for crossdressers, transsexuals and other people with gender identity issues 2nd Thursday of every month, 7-9 p.m. free, 510-582-0000/ Oakland Community Center of Contra Costa County, 3014 Willow Pass Rd. Concord, 925-680-0000 PacificCC.org.

PETS

Alameda San Spot Run Dog-Year Anniversary Celebration With a doubleyou artist, pet/owner photo shoot, food and drink, a pet psychic, and raffle prizes Wellbehaved pets welcome Sat., July 21, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. free Alameda Sea Spot Run, 2510 Santa Clara Ave. Eastmont 510-523-1 PGF AlamedaSeaSpotRun.com

pends Beetsnow With hands-on instruction in the varieties of rabbit care including rabbit training, litterboxing, and Asparagus exercises, feeding, grooming, and nail care, and exercises. For ages 8 and up. Virginia Lunch Oakland, and RSVP required.

PICKS



East Bay SPCA Adoptathon

Aside from their endless love for pets, these animals are also widely touted as beneficial to our health (unless, of course, you're allergic). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention attributes pet ownership to decreases in owners' blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and — perhaps least surprisingly — feelings of loneliness. With that in mind consider the East Bay SPCA's Adoptathon as a timely chance to mingle with adorable, adoptable animals, but a step toward better health. The annual event features more than three hundred adoptable animals — including dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, and reptiles — along with dog-training demonstrations, pet-themed activities for tykes, low-cost microchipping, and many more animal-based attractions. In Jack London Square (76 Washington St., Oakland) on Sunday, July 22, 10 a.m.–3 p.m., free–$40 per dog/$120 a week. RainbowEARS: 75011 Fairmont Ave., El Cerrito. 510-525-4150. RainbowEARS.org.

Bikes 4 Life's 5th Annual Peace Ride

While the yearly rally rides a bicycle for good health, fun, and a sharp-eyed critique of the proprietors of West Oakland community bicycle shop, Bikes 4 Life invites you to ride 1.4 paces at the 5th Annual Peace Ride on Saturday, July 21. The ride is intended to bring together everyone from youth on bikes to fixed-gear messenger bikes and dapper sorts in fancy, tweed-gears to little old ladies on bed-rate BMXes. Meet at Lake Merritt (466 Perkins St., Oakland) at 5 p.m. for a ride around the lake followed by a trek to the West Oakland bike shop (4646 7th St.) for a block party complete with bike competitions, outdoor movie screenings, and food and libations for sale by neighboring Revolution Cafe. Free. 510-452-2453. 5PeaceForLife.com. — C.M.

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3. Telegraph & 23rd (KONO) 7:50am
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5. Broadway & 10th (Chinatown) 8:10am
6. Arrive at Casino 8:45am
7. Depart Casino 1:45pm



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Through July 22. 11 p.m.–3:40 p.m. $40 per day/$120 a week. RainbowEARS: 75011 Fairmont Ave., El Cerrito. 510-525-4150. RainbowEARS.org.

East Bay SPCA Oakland Adoptathon With adoptable pets, dogs, rabbits, cats, and reptiles; dog demonstrations; pet-related vendors; and more group movements-times Sun. July 22. 10 a.m.–3 p.m. free. EastBaySPCA.org. Jack London Square, 76 Washington St., Oakland.

Kennel Klubs Greyhound Adoptions With Greyhounds available for adoption. Thru Saturday of every month, 12–3 p.m., Oakley.org/events.com. Pet Food Express, 5660 Oakland. 2981 dwight Way, Oakland. 510-604-2222. PetFoodExpress.com.

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

Awakening to Shabat Out Kam Nye presents Jack van der Meulen Jacobsen's ways to open the senses to beauty and wonder. Sun. July 22. 6–7 p.m. free. Tibetan Nyingma Meditation Center, 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6612. Nyingma.org.

Connecting the Pieces A spiritually guided healing and support circle for women and children with special needs. Third Saturday of every month, 10–11:30 a.m., $15–$20. Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden, 1233 Park St., Alameda. 510-865-2385. Julieslive.com.

The Oakland Imagination Summer Series: Befriending the Imagination Artist and author Ruth Bender leads an experiential workshop in focusing creativity and imagination on July 26. Sun. July 22. 1–4 p.m. $45. Ihsan Institute of Northern California, 1672 University Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-1927. DancingWithTime.org.

Kum Nye A drop-in time for all levels, with an emphasis for Asian-ness healing, relaxing techniques and revitalizing body and mind. Sundays, 10 a.m.–noon, $15. Tibetan Nyingma Institute, 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6812. Nyingma.org.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Bodies Made Mondays Mondays, 7 p.m., free. The Fireside Lounge, 1453 Webster St., Alameda. 510-864-1244. TheFiresideLounge.com.

Art a la Cart With bike mingling, and step-by-step fretwork on color mixing and composition, culminating in a finished painting. Thursdays, 6–8 p.m. Cardinnan through Aug. 2. $50. 510-469-1444. ArtsforCraftBuildings.com. 1st Art Bar and Lounge, 19 Grand Ave., Oakland. OaklandLounge.com.

Art a la Cart With wine, mingling, and step-by-step fretwork on color mixing and composition, culminating in a finished painting. In BIRCA (2761 Penn St., Oakland). Saturdays, 4–6 p.m. Continues through Aug. 18. $50. 510-865-1444. ArtsforCraftBuildings.com.

Art a la Cart With wine, mingling, and step-by-step fretwork on color mixing and composition culminating in a finished painting. Starting Jul. 22. Sundays, 2–4 p.m. Continues through Aug. 18. $50. 510-469-1444. ArtsforCraftBuildings.com. Cornish Cellars, 100 Webster St., Oakland. 510-550-2900. CornishCellars.com.

Berkeley Underground Film Society Join the film shorts screenings of Brain Super B, and Kenny movies and shorts. The week, show-motion films including Bobby Burns' *A Fable* and Out of the Inkwell Meets at 7:30 Gilman St., Berkeley. Sun., July 22. 7:30 p.m. donations accepted. BerkeleyUndergroundFilms.blogspot.com

Bicycle Bingo Slurry bike bonus is weekly bingo game with games, to raise funds for various nonprofits. This week's game raises funds for Gold Alternatives. Thursdays. 7–9 p.m. $3–$10. Temple Cafe, 6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-653-8386. ActualCafe.com

Cantina & Movie, and the Oakland With access to the centre's activities and exhibits, dinner a screening at *The Fifth Oakland* in the Mezzanine theater and more. July 20-21. 5 p.m. $5–$25. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

Live Drawing Party Watch local artists create original works, which are selected by jury/host Jen Sward. Third Friday of every month, 6 p.m. Actual Cafe, 6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-653-8386. ActualCafe.com.

Oakland Showgirls A weekly style-themed entertainment by live music by local musicians. Mondays, 6:30–8 p.m. $5–$15. TBDtogo.com/showgirls/oak. Uptown Social Club, 2220 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland.

Tribe and Tease Sundays, 7:30 p.m. free. The Fireside Lounge, 1453 Webster St., Alameda. 510-864-1244. TheFiresideLounge.com.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

5th Annual Public Ride Lake Merritt to West Oakland (Bike-powered fireworks). With patent, beer-sponsored and a bike-in movie. Sat., July 21. 5–9 p.m., free. 510-452-2453. Bikes4Life.com. Lake Merritt, 466 Perkins St., Oakland.

American Tripe Ping Pong Saturdays, 8 p.m. $5. Person. 2514 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-1031. PatsonBerkeley.com

Camp Cooking Basics $50. camping/outdoors, all Cooking Camping basics, an extraordinary class on camping/cooking. Thu. July 19 7:45:30 p.m., free. 1st Tuesday. 1538 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley. 510-527-4160. REI.com.

Chabot Bay Bike With an informative bike through the redwoods. On July 18, 2 p.m.–6:30 p.m. 2 p.m. $3 registered pedestrian. Chabot Space & Science Center - XXX Skyline Blvd. Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

Endless Spokes Lake Chabot Night Bike Weekly bi-wheel ride to the Lake Chabot Redwood Park and investigate bicycle lights required. Riders of all skill-levels welcome. Contact DeceitfulEndlessSpokes@comcast.net or 510-428-2553 for more information. Tuesdays. 6:30–8:30 p.m., free. Lake Chabot Regional Park, 10900 Lake Chabot Rd. Castro Valley. 510-542-2220. EBParks.org/Parks/Lake_Chabot.

Fast-Pitch Shoot-up Oakland With weekly adult softball games, Saturdays, 12–2:30 p.m. Continues through Oct. 27 free. 510-264-2500. Montclair Ball Field, 6300 Moraga Ave. Oakland. 510-482-7912.

dragging With hoop-dancing for people of all ages. Sundays, 11 a.m.–1 p.m., free. LaurelDragging.com. Jack London Square Farmer's Market, Oakland and Embarcadero, Oakland.

Pickleball A fast-paced game combining elements of tennis, ping pong, and volleyball. For all ages and experience levels. Played on the tennis courts. Mondays 9–2:30 p.m. $3–$5. 30 people. 510-569-7219. AlbanyCa.org. Ohlone View Field, 800 Portlandon St., Albany.

Symposium Sponsored Sea Kayaking Basics and talk with students tomato how they and photos to celebrate their work. Wed., July 25, 12–2 p.m. and 6–8:30 p.m. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd. Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

10-For-Free Practice Kasten With a 400-yard pool. 1 mile bike ride and 3-1 mile run for all levels. Check-in starts at 5 p.m. Sat., July 21. 7 a.m. Sat., Aug. 18. 7 a.m. 866-585-2397 785-7862. Bethany MetaKayaks.com. Shadow Cliffs Regional Park, 2500 Stanton Blvd., Pleasanton. 510-544-2220. EBParks.org/Parks/Shadow_Cliffs.

SPORTS-SPECTATOR

Raiders Take Pickle Bubber Boys With dollar hot dogs and other dollar-y delights. Sundays, 91 Golden Gate Fields. 1100 Ashbyton Ave., Berkeley. 510-559-7300. CostcoCenterOrbits.com.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Vampire Culture

Nineteenth-century Oregonians become the undead in Anna Fidler's exhibition at Johansson Projects.

Between *Twilight* and *True Blood*, Hollywood has catapulted the vampire higher into the stratosphere of spectacle culture than ever before. With this cultural phenomenon in mind, one may begin to bridge the apparent chasm between Portland artist Anna Fidler's current subject, 19th-century Oregonians with an undead gleam in their eyes, and her previous one: players for NBA basketball team the Portland Trail Blazers, whom she depicted in more or less the exact same way.

Fidler's artistic process, which involves staining a canvas with dark, watered-down acrylic and then building an image from an eggplant-negative of colored pencil sketches, has always left her subjects looking somewhat zombie-esque. From afar her large-scale portraits resemble pixelated negative images. Up close, an incredibly detailed line work — Fidler's way of simulating the effect of layered paper — suggests erosion or decay, lending the subjects a diseased quality. She also tends to reserve the brightest palette for the eyes, giving them an eerily unnatural luminance. At the same time, rays of acrylic



Detail of Anna Fidler's Terry Pitlack.

emanating from behind subjects' heads would seem to suggest saintliness.

Applied to ex-NBA basketball team this treatment amounts to a critique of typical spectacle sport iconography. Apply it to the grave visages of Victorian frontiersmen though and you've got yourself a roomful of psychedelic spooks.

With the exception of one promising portrait, Fidler's subjects are in no way famous or even known. The artist's mission here is not to warp existing auras, as with the Trail Blazers players, but to confer them — to soothe ordinary people in a sinister suggestiveness or larger than-life narrative. Like Hollywood she soon found herself in the company of vampires and werewolves.

"I would go to the Oregon Historical Society and look at their photographs, and look for people who look mysterious — who have a certain gaze," Fidler said. "The direction of the gaze, whether it is outward or off to the side — those small elements are what determine whether or not I will choose a photograph as reference."

From there, Fidler sets to work dyeing and drawing in her studio, which she describes as at once "very dark and dungeon like" and lively. Her works aim to intimidate, so size is key (the largest of them measure 99 inches by 72 inches), and at their level of detail, this means that teamwork is required. "My practice is very social," Fidler said. "People think it's isolation, working many hours by yourself. Actually it's a lot of talking, working with other people."

With the vampire cresting in pop culture, the creepy congregation at Johansson Projects is not only emotionally transfixing, but delivers Fidler's recurring statements about portrait representation and implied narrative, icon and spectacle, with clarity and verve in all the places where the Trail Blazers series dropped the ball.

Vampires and Wolf Men runs through August 4 at Johansson Projects (2500 Telegraph Ave., Oakland). 510-444—9140 or JohanssonProjects.com.

— *Alex Bigman*

ART GALLERIES

AGC| Gallery 2012 National Juried Exhibition With works by around more than 100 featuring the work of sculptor and installation artist Nathalie Miebach. Through Aug. 18. 1657 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-2527. AGCGallery.com.

Avatar Cafe, Our Family Tree With works by Avatar Cafe employees featuring Ken Bolinski, Mary Schulz, Rosalyn Pulse, Carla Tenorio, Jill Mason, and Charlie Bettis. Through Aug. 9. 10534 San Pablo Ave. Oakland. 510-652-8366. AvatarCafe.com.

Autotune | Mimic Wanderer, an Written A multi-artist exhibit featuring mixed media works, engaging the artist's physical surround and psychological and emotional spaces. Through Jul. 31. 2012. 2369 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Kala.org.

Aggregate Space, Hypnagogic With movement installations by Mirya Kingstad and videos by Rebecca Polle Remaggi and Jonathan Sabin. Through July 21. 891 West Grand Ave. Oakland. Aggregatespace.com

Albany Arts Gallery Natasha Foxcroft: Works on Silk With hand-painted silk wall and window hangings, clothing, and accessories on display. Through July 31. 1251 Solano Ave., Albany. 510-526-8492. AlbanyArtsGallery.com.

Albany Community Center Arts Foyer Gallery, The Painting is the Story With large acrylic paintings by Lucy VanHouzen. Through Sat. 2. LucyVanHouzen.com.

Albany Library With pastel paintings by Albany artist Ann Hall. Through July 31. 1249 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-524-0208. AlbanyCA.org/index.aspx?page=591.

Albatross Pub, Semi-Windy Thomas With oil paintings by the Oakland-based artist. Through July 31. Inmidday Presents.com. 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 551-843-2413. Albatrosspub.com

Bedford Gallery, CA Presents: Lordberg 2012: The Sepia Track With a low-powered mono radio station, live performances, broadcast events, video works, and in-car concerts. Through Aug. 12. $8; free for Master of the Bedfords. 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-295-1418. BedfordGallery.org.

Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch, Paper Works With pastel photographs depicting landscapes of agricultural, industrial, and Motherland subjects in the Bay Area and beyond by Beatrice Layefsky. In the lobby, during lobby. Through Sept. 4. 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

Frank Bette Center for the Arts, Alameda Perspective An exhibition of Sterling Hoffmann's paintings of local subjects, with an emphasis on those at Alameda Point. Through Aug. 4. 1601 Pan St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Boldt and Kelsey and Shop, Word to Your Motherland With visual and audio pieces and installations highlighting hip-hop culture's effects on Indian culture by Alisha K. Sambi, Hem and Lady Space, and Seb K. Through July 31. 1804 Telegraph Ave.



PICKS

What We Can't See But Want to See In Art

Bay Area Chimes in on a yearly exhibit in showcasing a handful of noteworthy emerging local artists. Then only commonality is that they impressed one esteemed juror — this year gallery director and professor at California College of the Arts Renny Pritchard. If there is any unifying theme beyond that, it is probably coincidence. Yet, the works comprising *What we can't and but want to see in art*, on seem to belong together, painted by a pervasive quietness. This is not to say they are dull; quite the contrary. Manabu Mabe's gold-flecked mural of wolves devouring a deer registers somewhere between the cosmic and the antique. Tromm Pack's untitled photographic scene to depict the secret lives of her lighting equipment, with it congregated and contemplates under cover of dawn and dusk. Sofia Sharpe draws an anime-looking set of tools belonging to her late father. All have a sense of that which is capable of being


Untitled by Tromm Pack.

felt, but perhaps of spoken. *What we can't see but want to see in art*, runs through August 24 at Pro Arts (150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland). 510-763-4361 or ProArtsGallery.org — *Alex Hyman*

Collective Art Show

Zero Fridas Gallery (484A 24th St., Oakland) is throwing a group show that appropriately calling it *Collective Art Show*. This is the kind of face-melting exhibition that young, obnoxious, know-it-all hipsters dream about, and also we're all one of those deep down, this is a show for you. Be warned, though, it's sure to be frightening by images of cosmic horror, violent fantasy, and general awesomeness, then you should probably avoid it. Otherwise, terror and be young and brazen with a point of the weirdest and most talented shapeshifters the East Bay has ever produced — including Oakland's Brett Amory, Concord's Manoel Lafarga, and Walnut Creek's Dave Correia — plus more than twenty other geniuses. Through July 31. 510-735-4495 or ZeroFridas.com. — *Obi Kaufmann*





Oakland Art Murmur Galleries

SATURDAY STROLL

Open every Saturday 1-5pm

SUMMER SATURDAY EVENTS

18 GALLERIES | 7 MIXED-USE ART VENUES

EVENTS ARE FREE UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

JULY 28

PHOTO Gallery 4-10pm
Exhibition Introduction with gallery director Irene Imbi d

Manna Gallery 4:30pm
Artist Talk with painter Wayne Armstrong

Rosco Ceramix Gallery 4:30pm
Artist Talk with ceramicists Bob Albright and Carolin Tarantino

SLATE Contemporary 5:10pm
Gallery Intro with participating artists and gallery director Danielle Fox

Mercury 20 5:30pm
Artist Talk with artist Paul Mueller

Vessel Gallery 5:50pm
Curator's Tour with gallery director Lauren Lee

Studio Quercus 8:00pm
Performance by Meredith Axelrod and Craig Yeaman of early jazz, blues and pop songs from the 1890s to the 1930s. (Tickets $10)

AUGUST 4

Chandra Cerrito Contemporary 2-3:30pm
Panel Discussion with Carrillon art critic Jessie Brennan

Mercury 20 Gallery 3-7:00pm
Artist Talk with artists from the *Female and Queer* show 4pm
Artist Talk with Eli Gienger followed by a performance by Christian Pelt 5pm

AUGUST 11

Vessel Gallery 2-4:00pm
Artist Talk: Tour sculpture installation with Alex Abojoie and J. Lin Hwein Kung

Crown Nine 3-6:00pm
Wax Clam Learn to make a mold using a natural object and make a wax model that gets casted as a pendant in silver ($30)

Studio Quercus 8:00pm
Home Movie Night A celebration of amateur filmmaking and home movie preservation (Accepting Super8mm, and 16mm formats)

AUGUST 25

Swarm Gallery 5-8:00pm
Artist Reception for artists Sydney Cohen W. Scott Trimble

MONTHLY WALKING TOURS

GUIDED THIRD SATURDAY TOURS OF OAKLAND ART MURMUR GALLERIES MEET 6:00 AT FARLEY'S CAFE, 93 GRAND AVE.

JULY 21

2-4pm *Collective Art Share*, led by Maya Kabat Artist Member of Mercury 20 Gallery and Fruitvale of the Board of Directors for Oakland Art Murmur *

AUGUST 18

2-4pm *Collaborative Art Projects*, led by Susan Sharman Director of Studio Quercus *

SEPTEMBER 15

2-4pm *Identifying How Art Impacts our Lives personally locally globally* led by Lanesla Lee Director of Vessel Gallery *

OCTOBER 20

2-4pm *Site Foundations Beginning with Judith Scott*, led by Staci Peterson of Creative Growth *

NOVEMBER 17

2-4pm *Installation Art*, led by Sean Lin Scott Director of Swarm Gallery Meet 2:00 at Swarm Gallery 560 Second St.

DECEMBER 15

2-4pm *Collecting 101 Follow Your Heart*, led by Mark Lightfoot of Manna Gallery *

Produced by OAKLAND art MURMUR oaklandartmurmur.org

Sponsored by EAST BAY EXPRESS

compositions and fluidized of character formation by Leah Mahan. Through July 28.

Along These Lines and Contours/Layers With photographs from two trailers at work in progress by Paul Mavrich. Through July 28 **Michigan** With a visit by the gallery's Michigan born friends Eric Rohr, Judy Blackbird, Kerry Vander Meer, and Mary Curtis Russell, exploring Nine events state through various media. Through July 28. 415-296-7414. Oakland. 510-444-1799. MemoryTrees.com.

Mystique New Art & Artifacts...Six Enchanted Castle Disappears With works by Adel Abidin, Cevdet Erek, Bruce Hart, Walter Kitundu, Gary Lehmann, Wendell Shenker, Karen Zuko Shen, Maureen Splash Tam, Tuthill, Deirdre Vinograd, Phantom Yame, Tim Stone Weed. Celebrating the Odyssey of Ariel Fahrenson's new book, *Artful*. A memorial. Through July 28, 1942 Solano Ave., Berkeley. 510-528-4701, MythicalYou.com

Oakland Surf Club, BE OPEN, MY FRIEND, With works by Anthony Acosta, Alberto Cuadros, Angelina La Cruz, Antonio Delavega, Matt Gretz, Justin Hagler, Tyler Hall, Ian Kearney, Yoan Acevedo, Peter Stevens, and Alaska Tokai. Through July 31 331 14th St., Oakland. 510-496-2118, BeOpenMyFriend.com.

Goldsmith Shaner: Richmond Annex Art Walk With art, entertainment, and refreshments. Participating Richmond Richmond art walks on alternate Third Thursday of every month, 6-9 p.m. free. Redondo Avenue and Spinnaker Point Drive, Between Grand and Whitewater avenues, Richland. OaklandArt.org.

Ghirardelli Creativity Center Moderna Paintings With gouache paintings on paper by Lauren Bon and a Tumbly installation by Margot Bissegger Gallman. Through July 21 444 25th St., Oakland 510-653-8979, Ghirardelli.org.

Photojournalist Gallery and Workshop Six Storied Video Bridges Then and Now With original vintage photographs of the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge by photographer Hamid E. Layne. Through Sept. 29. 1099 1 St., Highland. 510-868-0171, PhotoCentral.org.

Modernia Gallery This Week's Highlights... With black-and-white photographs of Washington by Pat Antonio. Through Aug. 18. 2235 Fifth St. Berkeley. 510-644-2400, PhotoGallery.com.

Point Richmond Point Theater Art Walk With art, music, and refreshments hosted at six galleries, gift boutiques, and restaurants engaged in historic Richmond. Point Richmond. First Thursday of every month, 6-9 p.m. PointSomethingArtCollective.org. Point Richmond Art Walk. A monthly gallery walk in Richmond. Visit Richmond to participating venues. Third Thursday of every month, 6-9 p.m. Continues Through Oct. 18. PointRichmondArtCollective.org. Park P. Richmond

Pacific Edition Still Life: A New works of View With seven Bay Area artists. Based on the theme and titled the Artists include Sue Averell, Gabriele Bungardt, Nan Hunter, Michelle Fredrick, and Summit, Chris Ferrara and Thomas R Jennings. Through July 28. 1547 Park St., Summer Park@AutodocGallery.com

Fruitvale Joaquin Center for Community Enhancement Brazilian **Oakland Visions: Outlook of Summer Communities** With images of neighbors in Brazil Avenue from East, West, and North Oakland by visual artists Semel. Through July 28. 2728 Peralta St., Oakland. 510-268-1812.

Pro Arts Gallery, Bay Area Windows 2012: What We Can Find and Not Walk In: See to Art With works by Renee Cummings, Ayke Ann Johnson Hassel, Jenny Mangum, Bridget May Maggie Mae Tropea Pack, Ari Salzman, Sofia Sharpe Matthew Taylor, Kate Thompson, Chris Thomson, and Matthew Yarbrough. Through Aug. 24. 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. 510-763-4361 ProArtsGallery.org.

Richmond Art Center, Richmond Art Center Annual Members' Show With works by more than 80 artist-level RAC members, and art by the Members Showcase award winners. Francis, Albert Moreland, Marilyn Hall, Suzanne Locke, Jim William Sampson. In the main gallery. Through Aug. 17. **AQUA Richmond Show** A collaboration with the Association of City and Guest Artists of California, on display in the level Gallery Through Aug. 17. **Bay Area Watercolors** With recent works by Nancy Malone Elliott, on display in the South Gallery Through Aug. 17.

Intersect 94805 Dueling Shelter in the Iron Triangle With works spanning three decades by Frederick Franklin, documents the battle the struggles and successes of Richmond's Iron Triangle Neighborhood. On display in the Community Gallery. Through Aug. 18. 2540 Shelter Ave Richmond. 510-526-6772, TheRichmondArtCenter.org.

Wells Fargo Oakland Collections: Follow the Flashing Lights A collaboration with the Tacoma Fotofil Museum Flashing printed murals, photographs, sculptures and installations by Eli Cassel, Dan Fontes, Jen Shaker, Tim Ed Summerfield. Through July 31. 2330 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-238-3191, WFSCollective.com.

Royal Boucher Gallery, 3 for 3: Three Summer Exhibitions Bay artists in residence Vanessa De Jesus presents Wa-site orphaned objects of Bahrain Jesus, and others arranged in a naturalistic, diorama-like setting. Through Aug. 6. 4373 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 415-890-2041, RoyalBoucherGallery.com

Anni Pulido Art Gallery Cinema New With paintings and sculptures by Vienna Armstrong, Elena Bonner, and Tara Weber Through Aug. 5. 13081 San Pablo Ave., San Pablo.

SLANT Contemporary, Figure, Form, and Fiction A gallery show of mixed-real tales on the human body. Through July 31. 472 25th St., Oakland. 510-325-8868 SlantArtAndDesign.com

Studio Gallery Tag, Three Enhanced A retrospective featuring the Studios long collaboration between painter Tim Silverman and painter Willie Montesa. Through Aug. 18. 385 25th St., Oakland. 510-451-4642, StudioQuercus.com.

Union Park Environmental Silent and Center Thinn Art Show With works celebrating nature's connection by 68 professional and amateur artists. Through Aug. 31. north end of Central Park Water Gardens. 510-232-7257 EBParks.org.

Throwback Contemporary Wall works 6 A group exhibition featuring site-specific installations by Steve Brown, Rebecca Gammon, Diana Guerrero-Maciel, and Nancy Monk. Through Sept. 29. 1805 Dwight Way, Berkeley. 510-527-1214 ThrowbackContemporary.com.

UC Berkeley Graduate School of Architecture, Valley of Windows & Seasons An exhibition of mid-century photographs from Bob and Shelter Lights, book, which highlights socioeconomic equity in Carlsbad's Carlsbad Valley. Through Aug. 3. ValleyOfWindowsAndSeasons.com 121 North Gate Hall, Berkeley. 510-642-3382, Journalism.Berkeley.edu

Uptown Artists Saturday Stroll A weekly component to Art Murmur but with fewer businesses and more focus on the galleries. Visit UptownArtsDistrict.org for a full list of participating Oakland galleries. Saturdays, 1-5 p.m. 19th St. at Telegraph Ave., Uptown

Gunter Gallery, Bonne B. Charting De Bonner With works by Alexandre Alegan Clara Bardesh, Bryan Nee Bonne Cartwright Lucina Crooker, Danielle Fortunato and others. Through July 29. **Kent, Wife Glass Thread BTW Where is There?** A group show including works by Bonnie Cartwright, William Garver, Nancy Kaucas, Daniel Glaeser, Walter James Richmond Cyrus Thorn, and Sandy Weiss. Through July 28. 48 25th St., Bonne

Ten Wall Gallery, Iron Work by Radius Tel With 6 paintings of people buildings, dogs, and shoes. Through July 30. 473 25th St., Oakland. 510-287-8422, TheWallGallery.blogspot.com

Fern Shaner Gallery, Collective Art Walk Through July 28. 4564 25th St., Oakland **Ingleton Gallery, Mudpuh: The Richmond** Rick Thurman's solo installation examines the humanoid of how Mexico by exploring the history of Uranium mining in the region and its effects on the Native American environment within and nearby. Through July 26. 1500 3rd St., Berkeley. 510-526-1501, IngletonGallery.blogspot.com.

MUSEUMS

Bechtel Museum, Museum and Library of Oakland. The Way of the Bull An exhibit highlighting bull-riding and rodeoing. Through Nov. 10. **West Wing Museum** An showcase of the living art form with techniques and models passed down from generation to generation. Through July 28. 660 14th St., Oakland. 510-867-0990, OaklandLibrary.org/AAMLO

Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive Photographs by Richard Misrach Photographs by Richard Misrach. Through Oct. 7. **Jack Shaner // MARTIN 2427** Following from and a close seen scenes of works incorporating a collection of Vietnam-era photographs found in a Berkeley Salvage store. Through Nov. 7 **Hiroshima's Pilgrimage: Journey to the Land of Sowers** Sculptures and paintings from Through June 30 2012 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-642-0808, BAMPFA.berkeley.edu.

Berkeley Historical Society, Early Days of Bonne + the East Bay With photographs of various Lost Bay Dance Imagery, dancing from 1880 onward. Through Sept. 29. 1931 Center St., Berkeley. 510-848-0181, Or berkeley ca us/Bonne.

Bonne B. Hunter/Museum of Anthropology, From the Maker's Hand From the permanent collection a selection of works from China, Egypt, and Peru, plus Mesoamerica, North America, and the Mediterranean. Through July. **Bonne Universal Quilcard** This "mobile storage publisher" comprises some 500 objects from the museum's collection of native Californian cultures. Daily, 103 Kroeber Hall, Berkeley. 510-643-7648, Bonne@museum.Berkeley.edu

Bonne of Mineral Art, Fleischmann Bonner Museum Celebrating Diversity through Bonne An ongoing group show Daily. **Bonner Art: Pat Portraiture** A celebration of pets, in mosaic. Daily 2626 Channing St., Oakland. 510-643-9690 Institute.Museum.ucb.edu

Magnes Museum of Bonne Art and Life, The Magnes Center Five Decades of Outstanding The first exhibition in the Charles Michael Gallery re-traces the 50+ year history of collecting, highlighting documents and artifacts that represent the milestones of the Magnes' effort. Through Aug.

Mills Photo/Bonne Multimedia works from the Museum's extensive collections of archival documentary film experimental film. Daily. **Memory Lab** Interactive multimedia allows visitors to create digital family albums and Bonne and bridge on their own documentary, photographs, and memories. Daily. 2121 Bonner Way, Berkeley. 510-643-2526, Mbgnes.org.

Oakland International Airport, Spanning the Bay A large collection of artwork exploring trade and tourism in the Bay Area, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge. Through Sept. 1 Airport Dr., Oakland.

Oakland Museum of California, Antonio Carbonell: the Art of Bonne Obama The first major survey of the Oakland-based illustrator, featuring original drawings and artifacts in an educational bonne environment. Through Aug. 12. **The UNICE Bonner** A multimedia exhibition examining the events of 1968 3 uniting point for a generation. Through Aug. and a notion of war through Aug. 5. Museum admission. **All of Us or Bonne: Social Identity Aspects of the San Francisco Bay Area** A participatory exhibition exploring the bonne maintenance of he mid 1960s, with old original political posters as well as posters digitally printed and collaged on the gallery walls. Through Aug. 19 Museum Monument Gallery of Richmond Art With more than 900 works from the OMCA collection. Through Dec. 2. 1000 Oak St. Oakland. 510-318-8400, MuseumCA.org.

Pacific Bonne Museum, Pacific Bonne Exhibit With its own Park and 20 exhibitheads from Larry Carlstrom's collection plus games representing early 1870s. With works by Oakland-based Cambodian artists and more. Through Oct. 31. 2485 Bonner Way, Berkeley. 510-642-9142 PacificMuseum.org.

USS Bonner Museum Youth Soldiers' Experience Photos and memorabilia telling the story of the most decorated generation. Japanese-American Japanese-American bonne was fought for the US in WWII. Daily. **Ellis** Bonner With pictorial theater restored by volunteers. Daily. 707 W. Hamel Rd. Malone. 510-521-8448, USS-Hornet.org.



Epic Art at Art & Soul

OAKLAND ART + SOUL 2012

AUGUST 4 + 5

THE BAY AREA'S BEST FESTIVAL JUST GOT BETTER.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT



John W Wood

www.JohnWoodArt.com

Oakland Artist, John Wood followed his passion for art through high school and undergraduate studies in Utah and went on to earn his MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. He has since lived and worked in New York City, Utah, Florida, Michigan, and California.

In addition to producing his own art, he has inspired many through independent mural projects with children of all ages in Utah, New York and California. He has taught at Cranbrook Academy Museum, through the MFA Artist-in-Education Program, and as head of the fine and department at Judge Memorial Catholic High School in Salt Lake City.

The San Francisco Bay Area has been John's home for the past 16+ years and making art continues to be even more than ever the central focus of his life and he regularly exhibits his work throughout Northern California, among other locals.

John Wood has been represented in California by: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists Gallery Hallway Bathroom Gallery Big Pagoda Company Oakspeake Creativity Center Cecile Moochnick Gallery Kimpenal Fine Art, and Hyde Street Gallery in Salt Lake City he is represented by Phillips Gallery and in Denver by Space Gallery.

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THEATER & DANCE

COMEDY

Comedy + and then Some At Jeremy's Performance Space 9 Boris (4/14) MikeMac Blvd, Oakland. Fri 7/27, 8:30 p.m. $10. 415-285-1534.

Sunday Night Comedy at Pinolry Hosted by Bobby Schaefer. Ages 21 and up. Sundays, 8 p.m. CuddlyPredators.com, Island, Parkside Club, 1436 Webster St, Alameda. 510-863-3229, IslandParksideClub.com.

The Untold Story With weekly improv comedy and live music. Every Saturday at 9 p.m. Saturdays, 9 p.m., $10-$12. Pan Tantrics, 2135 Broadway, Oakland, 415-781-1541, PanTantrics.com.

DANCE-PERFORMANCE

Rosenthal! Gallery Arts and Oakland Festival with a selection of Kathan culture through dance and discussion. July 20-22. $15 and up. 510-287-1980, RaqsTeaLunch.com. Humanist Hall, 390 27th St., Oakland. 510-451-3816, HumanistHall.org.

LIVE VARIETY

Discordian: Revealing Liars Histories With a stirred up mixtapes and performances encompassing colonial history by Sarah (solo) Adams-Foley on a brutish, Emmanuel in Amulet, Timm Sanglert, Anthony Allen, and Thomas Ma a and Jackie Rigg. Wed 8) CIR Jams: 5 pm. July 21 4 p.m. 410 EastSide Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-0989, EastsideArtsAlliance.com.

Heavy Metal Burlesque Show Wed. July 25, 8 p.m. The Make High Club, 2600 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland. 510-444-high.com.

Poetry Bomb and Poetry Fit to the Space With Rustic/choreographer Lucinda Weaver, poet Alan Stein senior Jim Weaver, poet Jack Hirsch, and visual artist Matthias Brudger. Sat., July 21, 3 p.m. $15 suggested donation. Ed Hamlin Campus, 2475 Alcatraz Ave., Berkeley. 510-225-6300, EdHamlinCampus.org.

July 23-25, 7:30 p.m., July 27-28, 8 p.m., July 29, 3 p.m. Wed., Aug. 1, 2:30 & 7:30 p.m. $19-$38. Willows Theatre, 1875 Diamond Blvd., Concord. 925-798-1300, WillowsTheatre.com.

Dan Wood's The Alphine Heist: Iron Misadventures of the Electric Pixie Wood's two-man show chronicles his misadventures throughout the 1980s, from failed attempts at working as a magician and a giggle to his stint as a live-in waiter at a retirement hotel. Saturdays, 8:30 p.m. Sundays, 7 p.m. Continues through Aug. 26. 925-256. The Marsh Arts Center, 2339 Russell Way, Berkeley. 510-704-8991, TheMarsh.org.

Fiddler On The Roof A musical adaptation based on Sholem Aleichem's short stories, set in a poor Jewish village in Czarist Russia in the early years of the twentieth century, through July 22. 8 p.m. $27-$38. Woodminster Amphitheater, 3300 Joaquin Miller Rd., Oakland. 510-531-9517. Wood minster.com

Hamlet Lisa A. Tremmerton directs Lawrence Shakespeare Festival adaptation of the Russia theology story Sunday, 1 p.m., through July 28, 7:30 p.m., Through Aug. 11, 7:30 p.m. Continues through July 29. 916-537-8500, 916-916-3616, livermoreshakes.org. Carnerrion Vineyard, 4590 Tesla Rd. Livermore. 925-456-2565, CarnerrionVineyard.com

The Land Election A Sam Shepard Mime Troupe performances based on the Russia 19th century masterpiece *The Four of New York*, told from the years of view of powerful and misunderstood Sophisticated. July 21-25, 7:30 p.m., free. SPAT ug. Westwood Park, 3612 Webster St., Oakland. 925-881-5808, TheLandElection.com/Public/Public/Public.html

Mr Bairey's Black Bottom Ayodele Nzinga directs August Wilson's play, starring The Lower Bottom Playaz about the complex violence of West American Russia men in North America. Sundays, 2 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays, 7 p.m. Continues through July 22. 415-829-, LowerBottomPlayaz.com. Stage Theatre Bowman Memorial Theater, 2520 Perata St., Oakland. 510-704-1412.

The Merry Wives of Windsor Virginia Reed directs a Livermore Shakespeare Festival production of a play about flattery, misfortune seduction and humiliation. July 18-21 7:30 p.m. Aug. 2-4 7:30 p.m. Sundays 7 p.m. Continues through Aug. 12. $5-$25. Carnerrion Vineyard, 4590 Tesla Rd., Livermore. 925-456-2565, CarnerrionVineyard.com

Nelson Off Musical Fleyn's British show parodies laughter through three successively more chaotic acts. Starting Jul. 20, Sundays, 2 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through Aug. 18. $10-$15. Live Oak Theatre, 1301 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley. 510-845-5580, LiveOakBerkeley.org.

Salesmanic Mark Jackson Nunnis his play about Mikal Allan, a Sea Francisco dancer who took Europe by storm in the early 1980's and Mikhail Alexei, newly known as "The Gallonte Dancer." Wednesdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 2 p.m. through July 29. 8 p.m. Sun. July 29, 2 p.m. Continues through July 22. $30-$55. Ruscia Theatre, 2981 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-843-4822, AuroraTheatre.org.

Spamo Patricia McGregor Russia's three Wheel unfused tales by Jean Paule Humorist Adapter by George C. Wolfe, produced by Cal Shakes, and adaptation in an outdoor amphitheater. Call to visit website for full schedule and. Wed through July 29 varies. 510-548-9366, CalShakes.org. Bruns Amphitheater, 100 California Shakespeare Theatre Way, Orinda.

Truffaldino Says No M. Stephen Smith directs Ken Slattery's new play a "classic commedia and modern dialogue." Mixed parallel worlds across the Atlantic. Sundays, 3 p.m. Saturdays, 8 p.m. Fridays, 8 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays, 7 p.m. Continues through July 22. $25-$30. WillowsTheatre.org. Campbell Theatre, 1286 Road St., Berkeley. 925-798-1300, WillowsTheatre.org.

Willy Russia and the Chronicle Factory A Publicity Playhouse adaptation of Ronald Dahl's classic novel. Saturdays, 2 & 7 p.m. Sundays, 12 & 2 p.m.; Thursdays, 7 p.m., Wed. July 25, 7 p.m. Continues through Aug. 26. 447-6335. Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-8542, JuliaMorgan.org.

You Must Change Your Life "Written Instruction" is a three-part performance salon series, with Paloma Madrigal, Connie Kilingsworth and Nik Hughes, Zach Houston and "Erotic Collective" Fri July 20 7 p.m., Bay Housework, 486 23rd St., Oakland. 510-238-7836, Bayworks.com.

Youth Musical Theatre Company Presents *West Side Story* Jennifer Blessing directs the classic musical based on Shakespeare's romeo and Juliet. Fridays, Saturdays, 7:30 p.m. Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through July 22. $13-$24. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/247184. Contra Performing Arts Theatre, 5621 Ashbury Ave., El Cerrito. (510) 231-1437, www.DiscussionGrounds.net

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

A Bell's Russia A Willows Theatre Company production of the beloved Yiddish classic about a wife and mother's devotion of the status quo of conservative society.

PICKS

Truffaldino Says No

It's a classic mistaken identity farce with a Shakespeare twist — and Theatre M. Graham Smith's directorial — that *Truffaldino Says No* manages to keep so many disparate themes into a commedia dell arte template and still create a sparkling, perfectly symmetrical product. That said, much of the play's success owes to its dynamic and seemingly breathless actors, most of who are doubled with two roles, some of which have to be on stage simultaneously (switching characters on her a matter of slipping on a mask or a pair of sunglasses.) William Thomas Hodgson is magnetic as the footloose rascal-stricken title character who belongs to a dynasty of Venetian servants (or harlequins). His mother, Columbina (Gwen Loeb), is a flirt; his love interest, Isabella (Ally Johnson), is comically submissive. But the real star in his father, a rubber-limbed trickster who has the ballistic elegance of a B-boy and the comic timing of a Stooge. Played by ACT physical theatre maestro Stephen Buescher, he's the kind of character you could watch for hours. Through July 22 at The Ashby Stage (1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley). 841-6500, ShotgunPlayers.org. — *Rachel Swan*

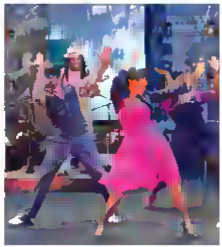


Jessica Pacpek

SPUNK AND THE GIT

Zora Neale Hurston is resurrected again...

By Rachel Swan



Spunk is fantastic. Kevin Berne

Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston enjoyed her own renaissance in the Seventies and Eighties, after Alice Walker resurrected her in a 1974 article in *Ms.* magazine, which she republished — and expanded — in the 1983 book *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. Six years later playwright George C. Wolfe adapted three of her stories for stage in the Obie Award-winning off-Broadway production *Spunk*, which premiered at the Public Theater in New York. That's where Cal Shakes Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone first saw it and fell in love. He was enchanted by Wolfe's sure-handed script, but even more so by the raw material. Indeed, few parts of American literature are as gorgeously limned as Hurston's vernacular prose.

Moscone brought *Spunk* to Cal Shakes this summer with director Patrick McGregor and a cast that includes some of the royalty of local theater — among them Margo Hall and L. Peter Callender. It's a lean ninety minute triptych that's almost more of a reader's theater. The actors double as narrators, using call-and-response techniques to foreground the oral tradition that Hurston loved. Michael Locher's spare set with its shelves of jarred beans and chinaberry trees remains the same even as the stories jump across time periods — many environments are implied rather than expressly created. Evidently, McGregor knew what Wolfe knew before her: When you're working with language as vivid as that of Hurston's, less is definitely more. Better to step back and let her voice be the main star.

But Hurston, who was adored by many of her contemporaries — including the poet Langston Hughes — for depicting race in a "racy" way would undoubtedly have approved of the casting decisions at Cal Shakes. *Spunk* kicks off with "Sweat," a story about an abusive relationship between a rail-thin washerwoman named Delia (Hall) and a philanderer named Sykes (Callender). The actors manage to find humor in the grim subject matter: Sykes berates his wife for being too scrawny then takes up with a thicker-set woman (Dawn L. Troupe) with an obnoxious laugh. "When she wants to laugh, she opens her mouth and lifts it back to the last notch," says one observer chewing cane on a stoop. Troupe demonstrates, and a peal of high-pitched squawking jangles through the Meyer Sound speakers.

The vignettes that follow — "Story in Harlem Slang" and "The Gilded Six Bits" — are similarly wry with spiky characters and vivid descriptions coiled around a plot that's really no more than a fable. "Harlem Slang" is about two consummate womanizers (played by Aldo Billingslea and Tyee Tilghman) who use their wiles to get a hot meal and a bit of reefer — in this case "pimp" is actually a euphemism for "male prostitute" — one ensemble member explains. "The Gilded Six Bits," meanwhile, is about the perils of avarice. Billingslea and Omowé Idehenre play a young couple Joe and Missie May, whose marriage is imperiled by an evil swindler, and by Missie May's desire for material wealth. Their understated portrayal of adultery and its consequences seems only to enhance the music of Hurston's prose: "A lean moon rode the lake on a silver boat." Missie May is a woman "wrung dry of solace." Joe says very little, but scorn is etched in the ridges and grooves around his jaw. Billingslea, who shuffles around in waistpants, is as glacial and elegant as the imaginary moon.

That last bit of performance was one of many high points during opening weekend, when the cast of *Spunk* regaled audiences at Bruns Amphitheater with a rich, textured version of the African American experience. From the moment that guitarist Anthony Michael Peterson (aka Tru) emerged to lead all of us in an Infernal overture, audience members were invited to participate. The play became a primer on ethnomusicology as well as a piece of entertainment. "I come from a tradition where we use call and response to bless our selves, bless each other and bless our ancestors," Tru told the audience on Sunday, before asking them to clap a beat that would replicate the sound of a train. Then Troupe entered, singing the first line of composer Cine Street Man's opening number in a warm vibrato. *How do you git to the git?* she asked, using one of Hurston's monologisms for "Eden" — it sounds like an abbreviated way of saying "get to the gate."

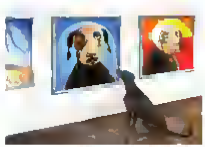
Show Details
Through July 29 at Bruns Amphitheater (100 California Shakespeare Theater Way, Orinda) $35-$71 CalShakes.org

You could look at the stories of *Spunk* in a purely Biblical framework — they all have a moral component or someone getting expelled from Paradise after all — or you could view them from the somewhat distanced, anthropological stance that Hurston took. (By most accounts, she considered herself a folklorist first then a writer.) But that might seem a little jarring to a modern audience. There's actually no need for Tru to coddle us with platitudes about the oral tradition, which are the only thing that really detract from the play. Otherwise, it's fantastic. ■

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LECTURES&LIT

The Microfinance Myth

A solution to global poverty? Not so fast.

One sentence into the preface to *Confessions of a Microfinance Heretic*, Hugh Sinclair makes his first bold statement. "The microfinance community often resembles a religious cult." It's a striking declaration in a book full of them and it speaks to the fervor with which philanthropists have embraced the idea of microfinance — which offers loans of as little as $20 to impoverished people in developing nations — as a signature and often literal good white hope for global poverty.

It's an attractive concept, to be sure. While some charitable giving can feel small in scope and abstract in yield, a $50 donation to a microloan organization bears results that are significant and tangible, a sewing machine for a woman in Bangladesh, a goat for a would-be farmer in Africa. Microfinance can be particularly appealing to Westerners. Sinclair noted in the book and in a recent interview, because it's explicitly not a handout — and, as such, "appeals to a lot of values that our society holds dear: self-help, ambition, entrepreneurialism, this belief in a sort of neoliberal capitalism," he said. "It's what we like to believe is the way to get ahead in life."


Hugh Sinclair

But there's quite the undeniably barking in there, one that Sinclair unveils in his book, which he'll discuss at the H-Bridge Club (2286 Cedar St., Berkeley) with journalist Rose Aguilar on Tuesday, July 24. Having spent the bulk of his professional life in investment banking, Sinclair left to pursue something "more meaningful than buying and selling meaningless bonds and filling out shallow paperwork." What he found was an industry nearly as rampant morally bankrupt and predatory, as his one he'd left — except with the veneer of altruism and the opacity that comes from operating in far-flung countries.

Over the course of eight years working for microfinance institutions in places including Mozambique, Mexico, Nigeria, and Mongolia — as well as for these (often very profitable) administrators in Europe and the US — Sinclair discovered a broad pattern of mismanagement, fraud and exploitation. He saw organizations offer interest rates well above 100 percent; institutions with collection systems more closely resembling those of loan sharks than of charities; and practices that made him question whether microfinance helps the poor to escape poverty, or whether it just pulls them into a lifetime of debt. He heard stories of women in India killing themselves when the burden of repayment became too much. He worked for a middleman organization that, he proves in the book systematically and knowingly invested in questionable institutions. The problem with exporting capitalism's values to the developing world, it seems is that we're also exporting its failings. "We've allowed the profit motive to take over," Sinclair said. "We've got cultures picking at the carcass of microfinance. And that's not surprising, given what's going on with the US banking system [...] It's tragic that we've allowed this unchecked Wall Street style profiteering into microfinance."

Sinclair may be angry, but he's not an ideologue. He emphasizes his faith in the microfinance concept repeatedly even as he expresses his disgust with how it's often perverted. Confessions is cinematically detailed cogently argued — and most importantly, scrupulously sourced. Sinclair has chronicled every conversation, correspondence and incidence in certain depth, and his webs he remains hundreds of audio and text files corresponding to various anecdotes in the book. It's that final element that takes the book from screed to something much bigger — a potential wake-up call. 7:30 p.m., $8–$15. 510-848-3222 or BerkeleyArts.org

—Ellen Cushing

LECTURES

Jeff Wolfe and Shubert Murphy: Haiku. 8 Oakland History of the World's Prize Biochemical Virus. The duo thrusted their haiku about the impact of the Ebola virus, beating up on the Louis Pasteur's vaccine. Tue., July 24. 7 p.m. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-525-7777. BooksInc.net/Berkeley.

Charles B Towns and Subhotronesh Tagore Third Annual Samahan Nobel Laureates, speak on the earth virus in rapid 145 Sat., July 25. 2 p.m. Tamalpa Hall, 1300 Bridgeway, Sausalito. Berkeley.edu.

Edna Oakland: Life in the Outgrown Loading for SF + Books. The SETI Institute's deputy CEO and director of information and public outreach discusses research into the possibility of life on other planets. Fri., July 28. 11 a.m. noon. free w/admission. Dolores Sauser & Science Center, 2000 Shafter Pkwy., Oakland. 510-238-7373. Chabot.cspar.org.

Isaac Campos. Home Student: Marijuana and the Origins of Shubert a War on Drugs. The professor and author illustrates the book at conversation with the RAND Corporation's Beau Kilmer and celebrity grower Ed Rosenthal. Moderated by the Cannabis Chief Officers. Sat., July 21, 6–8 p.m. Oakland University, 1800 Broadway, Oakland. 510-251-1344. OaklandUniversity.com.

Jeff Silverman Exploding, Stars, Dark Energy and the Runaway. The physicist and fellow at UC Berkeley discusses the research on supernovae, the celestial illuminations of dying stars, as part of the Science@Cal lecture series. In room 100. Sat., July 21. 11 a.m.–noon. 510-642-5132. SimonsNGH.Berkeley.edu/Seminar. UC Berkeley Genetics and Plant Biology Building, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

NASA Kepler Oakland Location: "The Shubert for Dusk Earths." UC Berkeley professors and astronomy department chair take the Peter leads a discussion with the Kepler scientists books the ground-breaking hunt for exoplanets. Thu., July 19. 7–8:30 p.m. free w/admission. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. Chabot@cspar.org.

Steven Cohen: New Knowledge: New Knowing, New Knowers: Creating an Educational Model for the Time Libraries College's co-director discusses the school's curriculum and vision. Sat., July 21. 2 p.m. Dharma College, 2282 Harmil Way, Berkeley. 510-845-2910, x816. DharmaCollege.com.

Seth Jaretzki. San Francisco Bay: Five Levels Coastal Areas to Explore! The author of Save the Bay discusses the local intelligence worth visiting. Tue., July 24. 7–8:30 p.m. MD Berkeley. 1338 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-527-4160, MD room.

LITERARY EVENTS

Judy Krauss Signing. Signing her book, Wynters. Sat., July 21 noon. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-525-7777. BooksInc.net/Berkeley.

Amy Waschgersee Reading. from her book, Marmoses from Cherry Harvest. Thu., July 19. 7 p.m. A Decal Good Place for Books, 6120 Lusaka Ave., Oakland. 510-338-9210. GreatGoodPlace.IndieBound.com.

Abel Perkinson Reading from her first book, Anal: A Memoir. Hosted by Heidi Pitlor, and with additional readings by Christopher Knight, Lewis Buzbee, Jenni Ivan Krolik. Sun., July 22. 5:30 p.m. Mythos Fine Art & Artifacts, 1747 Solano Ave., Berkeley. 510 528-4291. MythosFineArt.com.

Big Tree Society Homestead Group Discussing Carole Brody Fleet's Shubert, from After Dry. July 19 7 p.m. Books Inc., Alameda. 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-3300. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

Jack Gold Outreach Mixer Book group coordinator Linda Grenz recommends, chats and leads a Q&A. Thu., July 19. 7 p.m. Bissell & Scott Liters. 6433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9966. Gtrees Bookstore.com.

Brave New Shubert Books. Gino Hamid has turning two books of the brain reality stars. Thu., July 19. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Youth Speaks, Inc. Pegasus Books Downtown, 2349 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley & Oakland, 510-849-4129. PegasusBooksstore.com.

Sasha Isenstein and Allen Oakland With a poetry reading and open mic. Fri., July 20. 7–9 p.m. Expressions Gallery, 2825 Ashby

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PICKS

Anita Amirrezvani

With cel n pos ness pl power hold a special pla e in literary history, and Princess Pari Khan Khanoom Safavi is no exception. The daughter of the Shah of Iran and living in the late 1500s, Safa 1 Horrocd a hotel with a gilded-by-choice palace eunuch, an unobserved keeper of secrets and information, in an attempt to take over her father's empire after his death. Will they succeed? San Francisco-based Anita Amirrezvani will reveal the fictional outcome to her reality-based novel when she reads from *Equal of the Sun* on Thursday, July 19, at Mrs. Dalloway's (2904 College Ave., Berkeley). 7:30 p.m., free. 510-704-1222 or MrsDalloways.com. — *Alison Peters*

Anne Mendel

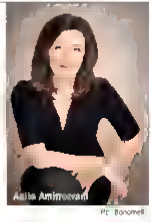
To an I ocsi f r climate and a craving for fresh warmer sure signs that things are not as they used to be. In a world ravaged by earthquakes, plagues, and the eruption of volcanoes in Yellowstone that blanket most of the US in ash, one woman, Sophie Cohen, steps up to fight serial killers, wage war on those who would hoard the world's supply of toilet paper, and perhaps save the world as she knows it. *Etiquette for an Apocalypse* is full of thrills, chills, spills, a lot of humor, and won't leave you high and dry. On Friday, July 20, at Dark Carnival (2086 Claremont Ave., Berkeley). 5 p.m., free. 510-654-7393 or DarkCarnival.com. — *A.P.*

Arthur Bloustein

You know we are getting good Infern als when a professor from UC Berkeley hips you to how to be a model citizen. In *Democracy Is Not a Spectator Sport*, community development and public policy teacher Arthur Bloustein collects Handbook of community-service opportunities and tales from the volunteering front. How-to is handy guide to being all you can be, civic-mindedly. It's perfect for those looking to join a nonprofit organization, pad a college application, or just understand how to get involved and what that means. Bloustein reads at Diesel (5433 College Ave., Oakland) on Wednesday, July 25, 7 p.m., free. 510-653-9956 or DieselBookstore.com. — *A.F.*

Laird Harrison

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Anita Amirrezvani

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Harrison's novel *Fallen Lake* is the steamy story of two couples who fall in love and decide to make it go off the grid—in 1970s. Hey, it's 1970, and they're all in California. It happened. But what of the couples' children? Follow the group's summer of love through the book, then go to FallenLake.com, where the novel becomes interactive. Catch up with the characters in the present through their blogs, where you can communicate with them and even share your own story. Hear how Harrison does it on Wednesday, July 25, at Laurel Bookstore (4491 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland) 7 p.m. free. 510-531-2077 or LaurelBookstore.com. — *A.F.*

Ave., Berkeley. 510-644-4000. ExpressGalleryCollery.org.

California Writers' Club A meeting open to all writers. Sat., July 21, 10 a.m. Oakland Public Library, Rockridge Branch, 5366 College Ave., Oakland. 510-597-5017. dpblanc@earthlink.net.

Dana Frucht and Lisa Brackmann The sisters read from their respective books, *Plague Town* and *Gateway*. Sun., July 22, 2 p.m. Dark Carnival, 2086 Claremont Ave., Berkeley. 510-654-7393. DarkCarnival.com.

Bonidee Barbieri Reading from her new novel, *The Damage at Glass Beach*. Wed., July 25, 7 p.m. A Great Good Place for Books, 6125 LaSalle Ave., Oakland. 510-339-8268. GreatGoodPlace.com. Unfettered.com.

Debbie Ann Grace With an informal discussion of fiction. 1p.jane River Staff 510.339.8268.net. Tue., July 24, 7:30 p.m. Avenue Club, 3256 Penniman St., Berkeley. 510-848-3227. HillsideClub.org.

Lakeview Writers Group Jeanne Lupton leads creative writing exercises and story sharing. Tue., July 24, 6-8 p.m. Oakland Public Library, Lakeview Branch, 550 El Embarcadero, Oakland. 510-238-7344. LakeviewLibrary.org.

Marin Poetry Center Storytelling Game With Peter Block, David Keough, Patricia Eakin, Adam Cornell, Mary Connor, and Jane Tara Dome. Fri., July 18, 7:30 p.m. Mike's Bistro, 2411 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2087. MikesBicycleClub.com.

Rockridge Set Painting: Georgia O'Keeffe Tackle Six Few Lefts Learn 5 key studies and a conversation with author Michael Shaffersmeyer. Also Ferrera, Amy Stevens, and labor organizer Carole Tobin. Fri., July 20, 7:30 p.m. Pegasus Books Downtown, 2349 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley & Oakland, 510-845-1309. PegasusBooks.com/downtown

Places of Work: Songs of Poetry and Labor With poems and songs connected to local authors Judith Offer and Adam Cornell with the San Francisco Labor Chorus. Sat., July 21, 3-4 p.m. Oakland Public Library, Main Branch, 125 14th St., Oakland. 510-238-3134, OaklandLibrary.org.

Poem Jammin' A writing workshop with Zara Raab. Bring paper and a pencil. To RSVP: Zara.Raab@GmailJoin Thu., July 19, 7-9 p.m., RSE, 545 Jo ssen., Suite Seven, entrance from 2286 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-848-3227. HillsideClub.org.

Sharing Books We Love Class members take turns discussing a book and Writing them. Led by Cyndi Clymer. Last Oakland day of every month, 12:30 p.m. To suggested Veterans Historical Intersection Chana. 1 Lawsan Rd., Berkeley. 510-

825-0282. VUCR.org.

Tea and Scribble A monthly write group for adults to discuss any thats they please. Tea and cookies served. Meetings held in the library's Story Hour room on the Rome Rear Fourth Tuesday of every month. 3-4 p.m. free Berkeley Public Library Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org

Uniquely Yours: A Room Wandering Thursday Writing Workshop Author Peggy Simmons leads a workshop for writers of all levels experimenting and getting, ages 16 and up. Drop-ins welcome. Ring term participation (alternating). Fourth Sunday of every month 7-9:30 p.m. $15 925. GrantWoodsHouse@sbcglobal.net. Web Paper Suitcase Collective, 2229 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-238-9171. NPSCollective.com.

PUBLIC INTEREST

2nd Sista Hand Community Forum An open forum to suggest ideas for La Peña's new mural with a nod to the "Sons of Unity" shamisms. Sun. July 22, 3-5 p.m. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

22nd Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking This year's theme: "The Power of Critical Thinking in Teaching and Learning." July 23-28. CriticalThinking.org. Claremont Hotel Club & Spa, 41

More Listings Online
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Tunnel Rd., Berkeley. 510-843-2900. GlasenonStreet.com

Around Metaphysical Toastmasters Club of Berkeley Public speaking club with a "metaphysical emphasis." First and third Thursday of every month. 6:45-8:45 p.m. free St. John's Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-6899

Read The Hobbit or Not Annual Young people share their thoughts about the state of the U.S. education system. Sat., July 21, 2-4 p.m. Frank Ogawa Branch, 14th St. and Broadway, Oakland.

"Operation Gateway" Seminar for Burnt-, Big Veterans An orientation seminar about educational opportunities for returning veterans, with info sessions and workshops, smoothing, and a barbecue to follow. 925-424-1571 x 1TheWell LauraLeeCollege.edu. Through July 19, 1-5 p.m. Las Positas Community College, 3300 Collier Canyon Rd., Livermore.

Annual The Hobbits Youth Annual The Urban Peace Movement hosts an all-day event of sports with music, food, and performances. Wed. July 25, 5-8 p.m. Fro Arts Gallery, 1501 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. 510-703-4060. FroArtsGallery.org.

SPOKEN WORD

The Berkeley Game With athletics, word and art improvisational based on *Big Breath* by Bobby Gaston, free James Fidwell, Saxon, and Kathryn Lasker. Open jokes each week. Wednesdays, 8 p.m. 97 Stony Brook, 2100 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley. 510-841-2082. StonyBrookPub.com.

The Dais Barrel's A weekly open mic for up and coming spoken word artists, jokers, and comedians. Sign-up begins at 8 p.m. Tuesdays, 9:30 p.m. free Downey's Locker, 5817 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-428-1355. DowneysLockerRoom

Bonny Doon Voices, International Game Poetry Game Festival Thu., July 19, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., YouthSpeaks.org, Subterranean Ambiance. 2119 Allston Way, Berkeley. SubterraneanAmbiance.org

Storytelling Song Storytelling open mic hosted by Cathy Davis. Third Thursday of every month. 7 p.m. free Dona Bella Center for the Arts, 1961 Park St., Alameda. 510-523-0917. FranklinsLair.com.

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PEGASUS DOWNTOWN STAFF PICKS



The Wind Through the Keyhole: A Dark Tower Novel
by Stephen King
$27.99

Okay I am a nerd for Stephen King and especially for his Dark Tower books- I've been trying to figure out exactly what Dark Tower takes me to get me the twelve years a gun, a d o one o those cliographic symbols, a spinne ng black circle of he weird sentences at the end of them. I can tell you know I was going to like this. But it set su gested me a lot of people complain that what ar unc it to ever really h earns in an easier sort a film hand to teens Am amused, and in the book it felt like he had one like he was almost underwriting for a change. So it ending up being a weird quasi in-universe fairytale that doesn't change much in the way of the overall story, but lets you spend a unique more days in Roland's universe. Totally worth it. I H

Published by Simon and Schus er 4/24/12



Supergods
By Grant Morrison
$19.00

While the opening chapters o Supergods are perfectly expendable, Grant Morrison's take on familiar territory fresh and readable. It's when he gets himself begins an intense conversation with comics in the abstract, that the book breaks out and turns into something unique and pleasurable. It's like Boswell's *Johnson* enters and after Boswell himself enters the scene. The chapter on Ray Thomas and the Kree/Skrull War is unforgettable. A must for comic book aficionados and an excellent addition to the growing bookshelf (*Men of Tomorrow* by Gerard Jones; *The Ten-Cent Plague* by David Hajdu; *Kirby, King of Comics* by Mark Evanier) that have sprouted like mushrooms in the mist, after Michael Chabon's *The Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*.

Published by Random House, 5/28/12



Office Girl
By Joe Meno
$15.95

I love Joe Meno. For the last ten years he's been quietly building an oeuvre as one of America's most diligent chroniclers of the young and broke, harassed and, still occasionally stoked. His also wrote the most depressing book in the world, *The Boy Detective Fails* and the Great American Novel *The Great Perhaps*.

The scale and focus of his new novel *Office Girl*, hark back to the scale and focus of his early work like *Hairstyles of the Damned*, but with the inclusion of photography and an reminiscent of his short story collection *Demons in the Spring*. Get on the train, man, Joe Meno rides. I H

Published by Akashic Books, 7/1/12

LAUREL STAFF PICKS



Any Day Now
By Terry Bisson
$24.95

A tale inspired by the final days of the Black is set against a backdrop of an emerging radicalized culture of the 1960s throughout the Eastern United States, in a comedy of-age story that serves as a transcendent commentary on the nation as experienced by members of an isolated hippie communal under threat of revolution. Oakland author.

Publisher by Overlook Press, 3/1/12



Fallen Lake
By Laird Harrison
$15.95

Hiram and Sibyl Eisenberg have fallen head over heels in love with Leif and Laura Hightower. Leif and Laura reside in the same mansion for Sibyl and H ram yet all four remain complet ly in their spouses. Who to th? The year is 1871 the place is California, and what neve ment possible suddenly irresistible. Camping on the shores of Fallen Lake in the high Sierra, one night they begin a new direction in their lives and those of their children, turning two marriages into one. Bay Area author.

Published by Verdant Books 2/3/12



Shadow Show: All-new Stories in Celebration of Ray Bradbury
Edited by Sam Weller and Mort Castle
$15.95

Featuring contributions from Margaret Atwood Neil Gaiman Jonathan Lethem Dave Eggers and Alice Hoffman, this anthology of original short fiction from some of today's most celebrated authors pays tribute to Ray Bradbury and his profound contributions to the literary world. Features some Bay Area authors. Hey everything is local stuff.

Published by William Morrow, 7/10/12

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The sushi isn't cheap, but it is impeccably prepared Luke Tsai

I DREAM OF SUSHI SHO

A true *shokunin* of sushi — a craftsman — comes out of retirement.

Luke Tsai

Not every sushi joint is created equal. There are fast-food conveyor-belt operations. There are buffets where you can stuff your face with all the spicy tuna rolls you can fit in your gullet. There are all-purpose restaurants that sell sashimi *and* teriyaki chicken *and* udon. And there are the fussiest mega-roll specialists that deal primarily in oversized over-sauced creations.

For the most part, I'm no equal opportunity sushi eater. But for the purist, the top of the hierarchy belongs to traditional sushi bars that only serve *nigiri* (thin slices of meat topped with fish) sushi and simple *maki* rolls — everything impeccably fresh and expertly prepared to order.

Sushi Sho is one such place, and eating there is a risky proposition. It might turn you into a sushi snob.

Two months ago, chef Akitoshi Kawata ("Aki san," as regulars call him) reopened the longtime Solano Avenue favorite at its new location in El Cerrito. I never had a chance to try the original Sushi Sho, but online raves painted an intriguing picture — not just of delicious sushi, but also of the enigmatic man. There was talk of strict "rules" with respect to everything, from where you sat to how you ate the sushi. At least one Chowhound poster referred to Aki-san fondly as a "Sushi Nazi."

After two meals at the new Sushi Sho, I'd say the restaurant is charming in large part because of these quirks, not in spite of them.

Here's the drill: Sushi Sho doesn't accept reservations or take-out orders, and if you call the restaurant, it's unlikely anyone will pick up. From outside, the restaurant looks like a private residence, and may be a dentist's office; only a tiny sign clues you in that it's a dining establishment.

A line starts forming about half an hour before the restaurant's posted 5:30 opening time — but often the doors don't actually open until 5:45 or 6:00.

Once inside, you're seated at an immaculate L-shaped sushi bar with room for fourteen diners — if you're the fifteenth person in line, you're screwed. (The restaurant has tables that can fit 30 additional people, but these just function as a waiting area.) My advice: If you can't get there early, try to arrive at around 7:30. You shouldn't have to wait too long for the second seating.

Now that there's a $25 per person food minimum, but $40 to $50 is a more reasonable estimate — more if you're drinking a lot. My two meals: The edamame and miso soup at Sushi Sho aren't so different from what you can get at ethnic Japanese restaurants, so save your treats for the good stuff. That said, the peanutty *yakimono* (seaweed and cucumber salad) was lovely, and the *chawan mushi* (steamed egg custard) was one of the best I've ever had, quivering and just barely set, with the slightly grassy flavor of mitsuba (a Japanese wild parsley) lingering like a ghost after each spoonful.

But the sushi is the reason to come, whether you opt for the *omakase* ("chef's choice," which should run you somewhere between $30 and $50 a person) or a la carte. And with sushi that's served with little adornment, there's no hiding any flaw — not just with the quality of the fish but with the knife work, the rice, the assembly of each roll. When the food is so simple, it has to be perfect.

At Sushi Sho, most of the time it is. The fish is trademark fresh, tasting the rice well soaked and served at room temperature — not cold as at inferior restaurants. And although Sushi Sho uses green wasabi paste, not the freshly grated stuff that's prized by connoisseurs, purists will appreciate that Kawata puts what he's determined to be the perfect amount on each piece of sushi. No additional wasabi is offered, lest you mask the flavor of the fish.

A few highlights among the *nigiri*, which come two pieces per order: The sweet raw scallop, minced and crowned with a dollop of uni, melted like butter in my mouth. The cold-smoked salmon was a luxurious cut with a clean, understated smokiness. The *uni* (sea urchin), four or five "tongues" per portion, was so rich and unctuous that it seemed obscene to put the whole thing in my mouth at once. And the *mentaiko* — a salted cod roe that Kawata described as "the fishiest thing in the restaurant" — was like eating the briny essence of the sea.

In the future, I might pass on the market-priced *aji* (fatty tuna belly), which was more gristly than I liked, especially given the $15 price tag. And the salmon "pressed sushi" — which is molded into perfect right angles — was gorgeous, but didn't taste so different from regular salmon sushi aside from a thin layer of vinegared seaweed on top.

But the one (inarguably complicated) roll I ordered, the *tanakyu maki* Special A, was another stunner. The smokiness of grilled eel, the salty pop of flying fish roe, the crunch of cucumber and the creaminess of avocado all combined to create one perfectly balanced bite.

Ultimately, in spite of his reputation, Kawata can come across as more of a good-natured professor than a stern dictator, if it sits any of his sushi "wrong," he never corrected me. But he was happy to answer questions. Which of these *nigiri* should I eat first? Should I dip this in soy sauce or not?

As much as anything, this Sushi Sho is a great destination if you want to learn about traditional sushi in an intimate setting — twelve or fourteen of you huddled around the master.

When we went for our first visit, my wife was amazed at the fact that we waited nearly an hour to be seated. When we left, all she said was, "I guess that was worth the wait."

I thought so, too. ●

Sushi Sho
10749 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito
510-525-1900
Hours: Tues.-Sat., 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
Reservations not accepted
Cash, Visa, Mastercard, Discover

Sample Menu

Chawan Mushi	$6.50
Wakame	$4.50
Nigiri	$4-$8
Salmon Battera (Pressed Sushi)	$13
Unokyu-maki (Grilled Eel Maki)	Special A*
A*	$12.50

Luke Tsai@EastBayExpress.com

IPPUKU'S COLD SOBA IS THE IDEAL SUMMER LUNCH

Plus an early look at the Berkeley Tuesday farmers market's new home

By Luke Tsai



The soba lunch is very traditional Luke Tsai

Among the three major Japanese noodle genres, soba is the one that tends to get overlooked in this country. Even the most generic Japanese restaurants have some kind of udon offering, and ramen gets all the love. But I don't know of a single dedicated soba shop in the Bay Area, despite the fact that this buckwheat noodles are ubiquitous in Japan.

So I was excited when I heard that Ippuku, the downtown Berkeley *izakaya* had launched lunch service with an all-soba menu. For the past couple of months, the restaurant has been making soba from scratch using flour imported from Hokkaido, so is traditional. A couple of weeks ago, I finally had a chance to check it out.

Ippuku has seven hot soba offerings, which are perhaps more in line with what you picture when you think of a Japanese noodle dish: noodles in a hot broth with some kind of topping. My dining companion *a ebi-ten oroshi* soba looked great, and came topped with a large tempura-battered shrimp.

But priests eat their soba cold. In part this allows the noodles to keep their ideal texture (in a hot broth, they'll keep cooking) — else there's nothing more refreshing on a hot day. Ippuku has a whopping ten different options for cold soba, but they're slight variations on the same thing.

I ordered the *nori soba* ($10): a generous pile of brownish-gray noodles topped only with *nori* (toasted seaweed) and served on a traditional bamboo tray. This came with a refreshing soy and dashi-based dipping sauce that you can doctor up to taste with grated daikon wasabi and sliced scallions. (Traditionally the inclusion of dried fish shavings in the dashi would make this not a strictly vegetarian sauce — I couldn't get a hold of chef Christian Geidemin to confirm so double-check if that's a concern.)

I'm no soba expert but the noodles were very good with a springy texture and a subtle nuttiness. Dip and slurp. Dip and slurp. Repeat until you're done.

At the very end of the meal, the server brings out a container of the hot cooking water in which your noodles were prepared. You pour this broth into whatever dipping sauce you have left and drink it like soup. It's a nice touch — again, very traditional.

All in all, the soba makes for a perfect summer lunch, especially if you add some side dishes for variety. The three-item bento box ($6) is a decent deal — the day I ordered it it came with *inari* sushi (a rice-filled tofu pocket) green beans in a nutty black-sesame dressing, and a vinegary cucumber salad that had a strong shiso kick.

As of this printing, Ippuku's website hasn't been updated to include the restaurant's lunch hours (11 to 2, Monday through Friday), or the soba operation has kept a fairly low profile. But that doesn't mean it isn't worth checking out.

A New Home for the Berkeley Tuesday Farmers' Market

Last week the Berkeley Tuesday farmers market opened for business of its new location, along a parking bay at the intersection of Adeline and 63rd streets. The new layout is less compact than it was at the market's original Derby Street location, and street parking, while plentiful, seems more spread-out, too. But despite the new digs, the energy hasn't changed. It's the same collection of vendors, the same ladies hawking copies of *Street Spirit*, the same glorious mid-summer produce.

Many farmers seemed upbeat about the change which moved the South Berkeley market farther south by about a mile, into the Lorin district.

"This is going to open up the market to a new section of the community and bring North Oakland a little closer," said Travis Jackson who was working at the Dirty Girl Produce stall.

Nevertheless, the move was somewhat bittersweet. Organized by the nonprofit Ecology Center, the Berkeley Tuesday farmers market had 25 years of history at its original Derby Street location making it the city's longest running market.

Didar Singh Khalsa, the proprietor of Guru Ram Das Orchards who has sold at the Tuesday market for 22 years, said, "We've got a lot of people that are excited [about the move]...and then there are a lot of people that are saying, 'What the hell are you doing?'"

Ben Feldman, the farmers markets director for the Ecology Center said it was mainly economic factors that necessitated the move. According to Feldman, vendors at the farmers market have reported declines in sales in recent years.

"Our core shopper base is very dedicated to that market, but we couldn't find new people," he explained.

The other motive behind the move was more "mission-driven," Feldman said. In general, the Lorin district doesn't have a lot of access to fresh fruits and vegetables — the nearest full-service grocery store, Berkeley Bowl is about a mile away.

As before, the Tuesday farmers market will open at 2 p.m. each week, though it will close a half an hour earlier, at 6:30 p.m. On July 24, the market will hold a grand opening celebration. ●

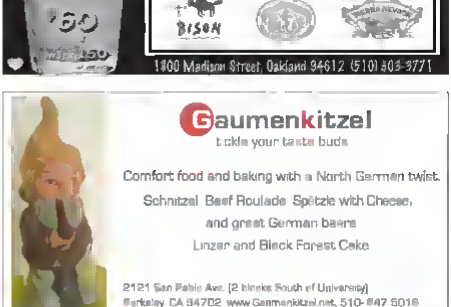
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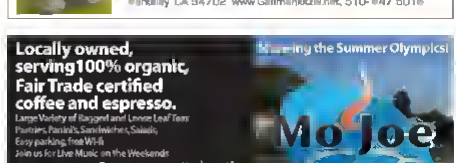
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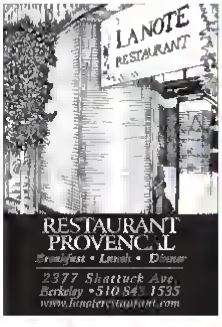












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RESTAURANTS & CAFES

Sushi Restaurants

Angelfish

430 42nd Dr., Ste C-2, Alameda, 510-749-1466. Some of the freshest, most elegantly prepared sushi in the East Bay can be found in a strip mall in southern Alameda. The owner and chef, a Kerala former partner, charms everyone who walks through the door with his sunny disposition and sophisticated palate. Meal eaters will find a few classic entrées. Everyone else should make a meal from the specials board, which features creative, seasonal dishes and the catch of the moment. $-$$

B-Dama

430 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-420-1978. In 2009, Chikara Ono helped open perennially jammed Geta Sushi with his brother-in-law. But Ono hung up his sushi rolling mat to open B-Dama, which offers a few of the few authentic izakaya experiences in the East Bay. The wide-ranging menu includes yakitori, little skewers of chicken (including bits like skin, hearts, and cartilage) grilled over charcoal, and a diversity of other dishes, from sunomi (salads) to stewed things, like the gyuniku beef tongue cooked over the course of two days until the texture is like velvet. Some of the portions seem out of scale, and the tiny space isn't super-comfortable, but for anyone seeking to supersize some non-Sushi Americana (Japanese pub drinking), B-Dama's the place. $$

Couch Sushi

532 23rd St., Oakland, 510-834-7686. Owner Hiroo Ohuchi was a baseball coach in Tokyo, but chances are he wasn't the kind who looked dirt at the umps. The smiling Ohuchi is a sweetie, of a host, which is what sets his unassuming sushi joint apart from a gazillion others. Plus at $3.50, the omasu sake bus is be the cheapest buzz in town — your traditional wooden cup never goes empty. Afterwards, if you can still see straight, etch your name on it. The sushi will have it ready for you next time you show up. $$

Drunken Fish

3311 Broadway Ave., Oakland, 510-625-3912. You'd be hard pressed to find anyone taking Drunken Fish's baroque approach to sushi quite as far as Drunken Fish. The names of its special rolls — Spicy Crunchy Roll, Volcano Roll, even a Shark Roll — are almost as evocative as what the wait chick rolls contain, which can include four or five types of fish as well as Sriracha sauce, jalapeño bits, or avocado mayonnaise (You don't get a couple plate of tuna nakiri, no.) Drunken Fish also wears pants for its artfully arranged room. $$

Eiraku

1724 University Ave., Berkeley 510-841-0900. If you believe that sushi buffets are not an abomination but a fantastic bargain — at the costly salmon, prawns, eel, flying-fish roe, and exotic anywhere you can get for under twenty bucks — then Eiraku is your home away from home. And hmmmm is the whole point here. Regulars comprise most of the clientele, lingering casually, and often for hours on end over sushi, nigiri and beers amid whimsical family decor that evokes your fun-loving uncle's beach bungalow. The all-you-can-eats also include soup, salad, fried fish, chicken teriyaki, tempura noodles, fried rice, stir-fried veggies, side dishes, and dessert. On weekend nights, for a few dollars more, seafood enhances the spread. $$

Genki

1610 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-524 1465. With creative sushi served in perfectly chill-mess tubes, and specials like an 8 shalone, Genki draws a loyal crowd of neighbors and regulars. Go early — it opens at 5:00 p.m. every day and the service tends to bottle down by 7:00. $$

Ichiro

418 19th St., Oakland, 510-452-1994. Ichi Kasahi's bare-bones sushi restaurant keeps astonishing people with just how good — and generous — the chef is. A two-item lunch combo may fill up your table, and he shows his seafood so thick you're shocked it still melts in your mouth. He may not offer dozens of varieties of rare fish, but everything, from the fat Americanized spider rolls to the ultra-classic oshizushi (bowl of mackerel over sushi rice), is gorgeous. Low prices let you splurge on the eighty-plus sakes in his coolers. $-$$$

Kiraku

2538 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-848-7581. Inchanges the Japanese restaurants serving snacky items to munch on while you down beer and sake have been in full bloom for awhile in San Francisco. But in the East Bay, Kiraku's owners Daiki and Sanae Sato feel like pioneers of the form. That's not to say they're midnight purists — they add European, Chinese and Korean flair to their menu of Pan ribbons. This tiny spot has become a late-night favorite for off work local chefs, hungry for diverse and compelling items like New Zealand deer sashimi, foie gras shabu-shabu, and sweet tea shimmanger. But take caution. Like Japan, Kiraku's small plates can quickly add up to a big bill. $$

Kiraku

2100 Ward St., Berkeley 510-843-3486. Chiki, lively Kiraku is a godsend for peckers and grazers. Not only does it serve some of the East Bay's freshest, chunkiest sushi, but the robata grill puts out close to fifty kinds of skewers — from asalapee to zuzu on the cob. And the sake list has been exemplified by connoisseurs for connoisseurs. The only downside? Kiraku's already so packed from open to close that they don't take reservations. $$

Mijon Sushi

3266 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-465-8854. The biggest, thickest, best-cut slabs of fish are to be found at Mijon Ave, just about everyone in Oakland seems to know it. Since sushi chef Jimmy Kim took over the business from his father he has introduced a line of bamboozle, colorful American-style rolls, but one bite of his uni or hotategai nigiri will show you that his skills — and his tastes — are steeped in classic Japanese technique. $$

Mitama

340 College Ave., Berkeley 510-652-8487. If sushi joints were high school students, Mitama would be the shy art geek that all the honors English girls had crushes on. This quietly chic restaurant, with its buttery walls and faux-plastic sculptures, looks more Berkeley than Japan. Some of the dishes, like the tempura potato salad and asparagus with sesame are cutesy-nice Japanese food we've accustomed to, while others, like the tellerially named American sushi rolls and battered strips of meat are as fusion as they come. $$-$$$

Uzumo Oakland

2451 Broadway, Oakland, 510-286-9866. Within two months of its subway opening, this contemporary, big-name eatery established itself as 29 Town's finest new locus of power dining. The concept (sushi and robata bars, fusion suites, and a pumping lounge) hews closely to its San Fran sibling, with one exception: there, in a vast Uptown corner space the emphasis is on izakaya, traditional side-bar small plates. That's good news for inveterate grazers and the budget-conscious alike: You can hang out at the roomy robata bar in high-style surroundings, for a happy hour that starts at 4:30 and never ends. Don't miss the meaty morsels (sushi only four bucks!) from the charcoal-fired robata. $$-$$$$

Sushi King

1630 Park St., Alameda, 510-523-4988. It's minuscule and easy to overlook, which may be why this four-seater buried in Park Street a upscale foodie mall seems like such a gem: a bona fide find. Most of the stuff is takeout, either prepacked or called in order. And though it might seem that you've seen these croup-studded, tobiko-speckled maki rolls before, the better-than-average quality of Sushi King's seafood can make a Crazy Monkey Roll issue, well, better than average. Great selection of hand rolls, too. $$

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Soleil's African Cuisine
1544 Webster St., Alameda
510-226 6747 Alameda's only African restaurant is located inside a bluegrass and country western bar called The Strand and Fiddle — a bit of cognitive dissonance present ever since Soleil's African Cuisine took over the kitchen. Chef Soleil Bangidi's pan-African menu spans the continent, and his food is outstanding. There's Congolese salad-slaw with cooked cassava leaves resulting some wild and soulful cousin of boiled spinach. There's Senegalese pepper pan-fried rainbow trout and a mustardy caramelized-onion sauce. Best is fall there's Tanzanian coconut fish: perfectly grilled tilapia served in an elegant coconut-milk-and-spinach sauce. Make sure you ask for some of Bangidi's fiery *homemade piri piri* hot sauce on the side, and save room for dessert — the piping-hot banana beignets are a real crowd pleaser. $$

FuseBOX
2351 Magnolia St., Oakland, 510-444-3900. Chef Sunkist Chang has transformed a seven-hundred-square-foot space in a starkly industrial West Oakland neighborhood into a bustling spot of a lunch spot. The menu riffs on Korean and Japanese bar fare. Chang's version of Korean fried chicken (a reminiscent of buffalo wings, except crispier and without the goopy sauce. His pork belly- and mayo-laden Busan pork is an decadent as any porchetta sandwich. Best of all are the restaurant's creative tomahawk (little side dishes) which come with any combo set. On any given day the spread might include several varieties of Chang's excellent house-made kimchi, a panoply of tiny pickled things (shiitake mushrooms, green mango slices, mirrot tops) and more. Equally impressive is how affordable the food is — everything under ten bucks, inclusive. $-$$

Camel
2020-6 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-926-6300. At this upscale downtown Berkeley spot, Chef Matt Gandin showcases Mediterranean flavors using local ingredients in a menu that changes from season to season. While large *platos fuertes* — wood-grilled meat dishes that serve as an entire meal for two or three — are available, most of the menu consists of shareable small plates. The name-based items (enchiladas, quesadillas, and such) can be very good, especially. If a mole sauce is involved. But the real stars are the simplest things: grilled corn slathered in *queso fresco* and chipotle aioli, for example or Gandin's minimalist Oaxaca-style tamale. Meanwhile, the setting isn't the best: a remodeled industrial space and a gorgeous covered back patio that makes for one of the best al fresco dining experiences in Berkeley. $$$

Kamdesh Afghan Kabob House
346 14th St., Oakland, 510-286-0200. Even if you've never tried Afghan cuisine, you'll find the food at Kamdesh Afghan Kabob House entirely approachable. It's the essence of down-home comfort fare: tender braised meats, soft garlicky vegetables, warm bread. The *bolani* — a traditional stuffed flatbread — arrives at the table piping hot with a potato-and-onion filling that results good homemade *pierogi*. Kamdesh's charbroiled kabob options are intensely flavorful but prone to being overcooked. Best is any dish served with braised lamb shank, especially the quadri *pulao*, a biryani-like rice casserole with raisins, pistachios, and rice cooked in the juices of the lamb. $$

Cafe Jolie
1 Old Webster St., Alameda, 510-522-5653. Chef-owner Joann Ostiarta calls Café Jolie a "French-American bistro, meaning the menu is a mixed bag: chicken strips and Cobb salad and a run-of-the-mill selection of egg dishes along side pastries imported straight from Peanut Lunch offerings tend to be stronger than most breakfast options, including a solid veggie macaroni (with béchamel served on the side) and a tasty all-breast-meat chicken burger on a toasted brioche bun. The space is bright and pleasant, and there's a nice patio area for those who enjoy dining al fresco. $-$$

Café Clem
2020 Fifth St., Berkeley, 510-548-2172. Café Clem brings a bit of Parisian charm to downtown Berkeley with its antiquey (and tasty) red-tiled interior and pleasant outdoor terrace. The order at the counter cafe is popular with the Berkeley High lunch crowd, but because it lacks a full kitchen — unlike its sister restaurant La Note — you're better off sticking to salads and sandwiches. The croque raconteur while not traditional, is a good riff on a grilled ham and cheese, and the delicious sandwich hearty features high-quality imported French salami on a well-toasted and buttered baguette. Avoid items that would normally be cooked on a griddle, like scrambled eggs. Meanwhile, an extensive display case features pastries from local bakeries. $

Tsuru Sushi
1427 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-352-3748. San Leandro's best Japanese restaurant (run by a large, friendly Chinese-American family) carries not just the Old World standards — sushi, tempura, teriyaki — but funky New World interpretations. Tsuru's sushi chefs specialize in elaborate American rolls, like the E. 14th Roll, a sushi-ing construction with tempura prawns, avocado, spicy mayonnaise, and *tobiko*, or the Dynamite Roll, which is dipped in batter and deep-fried. If you've got a party of four to six, make a reservation to sit on the floor in the small, walled-off tatami area. $-$$

Uzen
5415 College Ave., Oakland, 510-654-7753. Minimalist Eighties decor meets rustic pottery at this tiny Japanese restaurant, where solid culinary technique takes the yawn out of yoshoku classics like *tonkatsu* and teriyaki. Dine early if you want a full selection, the chefs only enough fish fresh for the day to whim they're out, you're out of luck. $$

Yoshi's Oakland
510 Embarcadero West, Oakland, 510-238-9200. Shotaro Kamio (still him Shoji) has a dual identity. The chef champions both Japanese traditions and a style of nouvelle cuisine he calls "kaisaku," adding sushi to a place that has served as sushi bar for the adjacent jazz club. The sushi is just okay, but Shoji's seasonal dishes excel. Broiled on sake-soaked cedar (to approximate Japanese charcoal) the Kurobuta pork chop is fierce. And barely smoked scallops splattered with truffle oil have the cool fire of vintage Miles. $$$

Yume Sushi
1428 Park St., Alameda, 510-865-7441. A meal at this tiny, hidden second-story restaurant is like being at a treasure. The locals would love to post a Keep Out Outsiders sign on the door, but instead they'll content themselves with the fact that you may never find it. Inside, the owner slices generous slabs of fish, and proffers beers and a big menu of small-plates like *nabeyaki*, soy-braised tuna and potato croquettes. $$

Price Key
Price guides assume diners will order a main course and beverage. Share appetizers and desserts, and fly adequately: $ — up to $10 per person; $$ — $10-$25; $$$ — $25-$50; $$$$ — more than $50

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WELL, WELL, WELL

You've heard about Comal's food. How about the cocktails?



Comal's cocktails are delicious

Pro tip: If you are in the business of essentially listening in on strangers' conversations and then relaying them in the newspaper, do not go to a place with a gazillion-dollar Meyer Sound system *specifically designed to drown out other conversation*. Likewise: If your job is made considerably easier by the ability to aggressively people-watch, do not attempt to do so in a place that has exactly zero bar stools facing outward. And finally, if your livelihood depends on uncomfortableness or coldness or out-of-the-ordinariness of all stripes — by rowdy bargoers or too rbusty tenders by drunk college kids or spilled drinks or cocktails with bizarre ingredients arranged in risky ways, anything to hinge a metaphor on — do not go to a place that is basically genetically engineered to guard against unpleasantness of any kind. If, however, none of the above apply and you're looking for upscale quietude in the middle of downtown Berkeley, — or just a well-made cocktail in comfortable surroundings — you should probably go to Comal and have a Jack Satan and a basket of chips. Trust me.

You must be hereby to be reading this so you've certainly heard of Comal, seeing as every blogger/critic/message-boarder/Human with an Internet Connection and Ideas About Things Edible has had the callus has taken it upon him or herself to opine on the place. Topics discussed: Whether chef Matt Gandin is the new hope for bougie Mexican in the East Bay (discussed by our very own food critic Luke Tsai in these pages — answer: maybe) and as a corollary, whether white people are capable of making Mexican food (clearly); whether this is the shit in the arm downtown Berkeley needs (too soon to tell); whether the lights are too bright or the tacos too small or the antique fir flooring too hard or the guac *the best you've ever had* or just merely very good. or the squash blossom quesadillas or squash-blossomy or not squash blossomy enough or just the right amount of squash blossomy (none of which I'm dignifying with a response). This is a place that's been so thoroughly buzzed about it'd be deafening, but for that afore mentioned sound system. Failed again.

Comal
2020 Shattuck Ave.
Berkeley
510-926-6300
ComalBerkeley.com
Bar hours: Sun.-Thurs. 5 p.m.-11 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 5 p.m.-midnight

Comal is, indeed, well appointed and well-designed and well-thought-out and positively up to its eyeballs in ambition. From the outside, it looks like either a Robocop set piece or a bike gang bar with a name like Pitch or Raw or The Cockpit: all heavy steel and darkened windows. But inside it's surprisingly airy and light, with reclaimed tables and unrevarnished beams, cuppery chandeliers on the ceilings and large-format art on the walls, blond wood and bleach people not a leather daddy in sight (alas!). Much has of course been made of the restaurant's back deck and, yes, it is exactly that amazing: partly covered for personalized sun and/or stars exposure, potted plant bedecked, possessing of its very own bar. All told, "expensive" is a word that comes to mind immediately and sticks there — though not necessarily in a bad way. This is the sort of place where people seem to dress better and laugh more than they do in real life and where the cocktails come to chilled, spare-dusted glasses and where you can't imagine anything bad happening, ever — pleasantness apparently has a price tag.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Comal's cocktail program comes with a name brand attached to it — that of the Bon Vivants, a San Francisco-based collective described by its website as a "nationally recognized cocktail and spirit consulting company specializing in [among other things] the creation of tailored on-premise beverage programs." The people behind Comal are clearly invested in the drinks, which is nice — each bar has prime placement in both dining areas and stays open later than the restaurant — and as tailored-on-premise beverage programs go, Comal's is, as to be expected, expertly engineered and fairly exceptional, though it's also pretty unpretentious. Their signature cocktails, all but one tequila- or mezcal-based, work especially delicious based on the three I've tried so far. The margarita (Cimarron Blanco, orange-scented agave syrup, lime, $9) is a nicely balanced take on the classic, the Paloma-esque (Del Maguey Vida Mezcal, Cocchi Americano, grapefruit, lime, honey, salt soda, $9) manages sour-ishly sweet with impressive deftness, and the Jack Satan (Partida Reposado, absinthe, agave syrup, Peychaud's bitters, lime, salt, $9) is densely layered but surprisingly delicate, my personal favorite. (Also not surprisingly, cocktails are doing bang-up business here, according to one bartender, bringing in a significantly larger portion of alcohol sales versus beer and wine than at the average restaurant.) The patrons are well behaved and the bartenders are the perfect amount of chatty and, over the course of two visits, exactly zero drinks were spilled on me. Comal's metaphor is the absence of metaphor. The guac, meanwhile, is not the best I've ever had, but it's very good.

Ellen.Cushing@EastBayExpress.com

FOOD & WINE

CULINARY & WINE

The Art of Hot Wok Workshop Learn how to prepare seasoned shrimp, beef and Mandarin crown jewel fried rice, and taro-original sweet bun. Tue., July 24. $39/$50. 6:30 p.m. $4 (Kitchen on Fire West, 2640 Seventh St., Berkeley. 510-548-2986. KitchenOnFire.com.

Bites of Beer Grand Berkeley Celebrate the opening of Hot Italian with pop-ups from Mountain Rotisserie, Cajun Mama Eats and PUBLIC Bites. Social hour tastings lead Publicbeer and Sierra Nevada and more. Thu., July 19. 5-9 p.m. varies. Hot Italian, 1950 Shattuck Ave., Emeryville. 510-922-1449. ftp://hotitalian.net.

Dinner Club Latin Freestyle" Dinner Pop-Up Fridays, 1:00 p.m. Through July 21 weeks. 510-581-1623. BuenaSuerte.com. Guerilla Cafe, 1620 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-2233. GuerillaCafe.com.

Ghastly Dinner With surf & turf foods, potato garden salad bread and foods, and raspberry bread pudding. Proceeds benefit Island Cat Rescue & Adoption Tue. July 24, 6:30-8 p.m. $45. High Street Station Cafe, 1303 High St., Alameda. 510-895-8048. HighStreetStation.com.

Intimidate to the Kitchen: Decadent Desserts Learn how to prepare flambéed Bolivian pancakes with cocoa Bolivian and vanilla bean whipped cream, chocolate-cinnamon bark with maple brandy glaze, and more. Tue., July 24. 6:30-9:30 p.m. $70. Kitchen on Fire West, 2640 Seventh St., Berkeley. 510-548-2986. KitchenOnFire.com.

Essential Techniques Workshop Master Learn how to make various sauces, from purees to reductions. Sat., July 21. 12-3 p.m., $4 (Kitchen on Fire West, 2640 Seventh St., Berkeley. 510-548-2986. KitchenOnFire.com.

Meet the Brewer with Biergarten Brewing Wed., July 25. 6 p.m. free. Beer Revolution, 4764 34th St., Oakland. 510-482-2207. BeerRevolution.com.

Mixologist Combos Release: "Tracklings from the Top: Life Lessons from the Year in Beer" With a book signing. Sun., July 22. 2 p.m. Beer Revolution, 4764 34th St., Oakland. 510-482-2337. Beer-Revolution.com.

Mistrwood Feast: A Bookmobile Restaurant Tour of Berkeley With a three-course dinner featuring food from three sustainable restaurants. Gather Free and Dinner Bar + Kitchen, and Cafe by Bookmobile. Mark Pastarnak, owner of Peet's Coffee & Tea's. Wed., July 25. 5:30-9 p.m. $75-$85. 510-704-0319. BayAreaGreenFeasts.org. Gather, 2200 Fillmore St., Berkeley. 510-809-0400. GatherRestaurant.com.

Seasonal Tequila Day North Taste on Library tequila cocktail tasting with 1800 watermelon margaritas and more. July 20-24 varies. Chevy's Fresh Mex, 1800 Powell St., Emeryville. 510-653-8210.

Parmigiana Street Food Workshop Learn how to prepare grilled chicken with pistachio pepper marinade, marinated pork rollin' sandwiches and more. Mon., July 23, 6:30-9:30 p.m., $70. Kitchen on Fire North, 1600 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-2986. KitchenOnFire.com.

Pyramid and 1977 The Dave & Charity Weekend With passport with free test tags. Barbecue for personal and free foods. Proceeds benefit the Berkeley Firefighters Billboard Acts of Farmers and the Alma Ave Rum Rum Foundation. Sat. July 21. 12-4 p.m. $25. BerkeleyFeast.Eventbrite.com. Pyramid Alehouse, 901 Gilman St., Berkeley. 510-527-9000. PyramidBrew.com.

Sunday Potluck Dinner Biking food and beverages for as a mass people. Sun. July 22. 6:30 p.m. free. MarketChats, 2286 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-848-3227. HillsideClub.org.

Taste of Bay Street With live music, food samples and other Wineries. Sat. July 21. 1-5 p.m. free. Bay Street Mall, 5614 Bay St., Emeryville. 510-655-8402. BayStreetEmeryville.com.

Wine Club Dinner Lake Valley Bistro Wed. July 25. Eden Eaters, 1849 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley. 510-848-2155. Limited-Eaters.com

FARMERS' MARKETS

Alameda Farmers' Market With freshly grown fruits and vegetables, plus locally artisan foods. Tuesdays, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. free. PCMA.com/Alameda Farmers' Market Heights Ave. at Whitehall St., Alameda.

Albany Farmers' Market With local, seasonal produce and specialty foods. On Solano Avenue (between San Pablo Avenue and Adams Street). Wednesdays, 9-2 p.m. Continues through Oct. 31. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.

Bayfair Center Farmers' Market Fresh fruits and vegetables by local organic and specialty farmers. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. free. Bayfair Center, 15255 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-357-6606. ShopBayfair.com.

Fruitvale Farmers' Market With locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, baked products, and many. Among NYC and ART Sundays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. free. 510-535-6629. Fruitvale Village, 3401 E. 12th St., at Fruitvale BART. Billboard 510-534-4600. InterCoastal.org.

Grand Lake Farmers' Market The weekly market hosts more than 80 produce organized foods, and crafts and crafts vendors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. free. 800-201-3076. SpiritOfTheLake.org/farmersmarket. Splash Pad, Grand Ave. and Lake Park Ave. Oakland. 510-238-7215. GrandLakeFarmersMarket.org.

Hayward City Hall Billboard Market A farmers' market featuring locally grown and seasonal foods from more 75 Billboard and specialty food purveyors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. free. 888-881-3676. AgricultureInstitute.org. Hayward City Hall, 777 B St., Hayward. 510-581-4000. 24 Hayward, Calif.

Kensington Farmers' Market With a mostly fresh flowers, an organic assortment, beer products, fresh wild fish, fruits, vegetables, nuts, butters, foods, cheese from pasta and seasonal samples. The market and foods live music and entertainment. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 510-841-0801. KensingtonFarmersMarket.org. Gateway Circle at the Colusa Circle Kensington.

Laurel Market Farmers' Market With certified organic produce from 30 Organic Farm and a youth-led community food outlet foods, the Purple Lawn Cafe. Saturdays, 10 a.m. 2 p.m. free. 510-482-1866.

Food Connect Culture and Laurel Berkeley Farmers Market 4173 Mountain Blvd., Oakland.

Mountain Village Farmers Market Featuring organic produce and many-prepared foods. Free parking in Village garage at the top of La Salle Avenue. Sundays, 9 a.m. 1 p.m. Rec. Mountain Village (only farmers' market). Downtown Mountain Village LaSalle and Moraga Ave., Oakland.

North Berkeley Farmers Market With baked goods, specialty foods, all organic produce, and more for sale, along with dinner programs and events. WIC and EBT accepted. Thursdays, 3-7 p.m. free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Shop Bank Ave. at Rose St., Berkeley.

Rockridge Farmers Market With a healthy cafe and commercial kitchen space, seasonal organic Oakland farm Bay Area produce, and many baked goods. Saturdays, 10 a.m. 2 p.m., free. PlaceholderProduce.org, 5642 Scarborough Ave. 5472 Oakland Ave., Oakland.

Old Oakland Farmers Market Features seasonal fresh breads, nuts and other organic foods, along with plenty of specialty foods. 8 a.m. 2 p.m. free. Old Oakland Farmers Market, 9th St. Oakland Broadway and City St., Oakland. OaklandHistoricDistrict.com.marketplace.com.

Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Sunset Farmers' Market With seasonal Oakland grown fruits, nuts, flowers, specialty produce, cut flowers, specialty foods, yoga Harbour live music and and and crafts for sale. Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. free. PCFMA.com 19th London Square, 09 Broadway, Oakland.

Richmond Farmers' Market With fruits locally grown nut, live chickens, Braggs eggs, and other products. WIC and SNAP accepted. Fridays, 8 a.m. 5 p.m. free. RichmondFarmersMarket.org. Richmond Farmers' Market 24th St. and Barrett Ave. Richmond.

Richmond Main Street Farmers Market With fresh fruits and vegetables, foods, goods, flowers, and a range of other agricultural and culinary products and local farmers. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. free. 510-238-4468. RichmondMainStreet.org. Nevin Plaza, 13th Street and Nevin Avenue, Richmond.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market With fresh and organic Oakland breads, specialty foods, and more for sale, plus dinner programs and events. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center Park, 2151 North Lake Street King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-981-6450 (Ellsworth Ca.Us/SaturdayFarmersMarket.htm 22960

South Berkeley Farmers Market With fresh produce and more. Food for sale Tuesdays, 2-6:30 p.m. South Berkeley Farmers' Market, Adeline and 63rd sts., Berkeley. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.

Temescal Farmers' Market California certified farmers offer seasonal produce, dried fruits and nuts, fresh eggs, baked goods. Locally caught fish, Berkshire flowers, and more. Sundays, 9 a.m. 1 p.m. free. 510-415-1190. OMV Parking Lot, 5330 Claremont Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market Fresh and organic produce, breads, specialty foods, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.

Ygnacio Valley Farmers' Market With fresh and delicious sweets. Berkeley. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.









PICK

Farmers' Market Grand Opening

Get a load of seasonal organic goodies — but in a new location with built-in parking. A grand-opening celebration for the Tuesday afternoon South Berkeley Farmers' Market (see this week's What the Heck, pg. 95) at its new site — along Adeline Street near 62nd Street — on Tuesday, July 24 features talks by City Councilman Maxwell Anderson and Ecology Center project manager Ben Feldman



as well as live music by Dr. Dr. wayne Oakley Blues Ensemble, dance performances by Mamba Mi Ndeke Ntango and one-act play with a new twist by Shotgun Players. 2 p.m., free. 510-548-2441 (EcologyCenter.org. — Annesh Jhafra

THROUGH THE PAST MELODIOUSLY

Jewish Film Festival goes with the old relishes.

By Kelly Vance

Film fests do not live an controversy alone, not even the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. After years of living dangerously with events marked by shouting matches and internal upheavals over hot button political offerings — most of them centering on Israeli-Palestinian relations — the reconstituted suitably chastised SFJFF last year settled into what might be termed a kinder gentler mode.

Nostalgia (always popular) was in while cutting-edge doubts about the West Bank and Gaza were out. Well perhaps not entirely. The world's longest-running of Jewish film festival didn't gain its reputation for thought provoking evenings by sticking to cream puff sitcoms and Holocaust dramas. And any fest that has filmmaker Jay Rosenblatt as program director can be counted on to screen its share of artistically challenging oddities. But still.

The fests Pollyanna brand of cheerful-fetsy coverage of the current Middle East situation can be found at this year's festival but you're going to have to search it out (see *Shavuja* and *Ameer Got His Gun* below). Instead, the main thrust of the 32nd-annual SFJFF is the Old Days 'Tin Pan Alley multicult: Berkeley hipsters from the Sixties in Amerika; American athlets who defied Hitler the tribulations of Roman Polanski Bubbe and Zade recalling long-ago tragedies and triumphs and the eternal struggle against anti-Zionist hoodlums. To borrow the festival advertising's humorous triple device: A few shvvrrrst more than enough shmeggege, and a distinct lack of shpilkes to tuckus. Drink an extra cup of coffee.

For pop-music fans of a certain age, just seeing "(Pomus)" in "(Pomus-Shuman)" on a record label guarantees a good time. As vividly explained in Peter Miller and Will Hechter's bubbly documentary *A.K.A. Doc Pomus*, songwriter Doc Pomus (1925-1991) born Jerome Felds, in Brooklyn was responsible for a number lode of hits from the Fifties through the Eighties, whether on his own or in collaboration with Mort Shuman, Phil Spector, or Mac "Dr John" Rebennack. Elvis Presley ("Viva Las Vegas", "Surrender") and The Drifters ("Save the Last Dance for Me", "This Magic Moment") were his two most prominent clients, although he contributed memorable songs to Ray Charles ("Lonely Avenue"), Dion and the Belmonts ("Teenager in Love"), and Andy Williams ("Can't Get Used to Losing You") among others.

Doc's heartfelt lyrics of pain and longing were undoubtedly the product of his disability — a childhood bout with polio left him on crutches the rest of his life — but his outsider point of view was confirmed by his enthusiasm for African-American music. In the New York R&B nightclubs he haunted in his youth he was most definitely the only white, Jewish polio victim in the crowd. Blues was a rauthight lady with a love lock on my soul," he wrote. Such illustrious talking heads as Tom Waits and the team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller sing his praises and we marvel at the energy of this man, an irrepressible naimut born lover.

A.K.A. Doc Pomus plays the Roda Theatre (3125 Addison St., Berkeley) on August 4.

As long as we're in the Brill Building, let's pick up the story of Paul Simon's mega-successful album *Graceland*, with which the erstwhils Tin Pan Alley singer-songwriter revived his career in 1985. In *Under African Skies*, a documentarian Joe Berlinger tags along with Simon as he revisits South Africa on *Graceland*'s 25th anniversary, hooking up with the local musicians (Ladysmith Black Mambazo, et al) he worked with then. And the same nagging question comes up: Why did Simon defy a UN international cultural boycott by recording the album in the then-apartheid governed country? The only thing the older but presumably wiser Simon can say now is that he didn't quite understand the politics right. We encounter the Eternal Search for the Authentic and other knotty problems, and Berlinger's camera coolly drinks it all in. David Byrne, Philip Glass, and Hugh Masakela all chime in with their thoughts on the subject. How does this fit into the Jewish Film Festival? Simon is nominally Jewish. It screens on July 28 at the Roda.

As if to wash the taste of the previous film out of our mouths, Rachel Leah Jones' marvelous *Gypsy Davy* plunges deep into the creative spirit with a very personal documentary reflection on her father traditional flamenco guitarist David Serva. Born David Jones and raised in Berkeley, the young musician established himself in the Bay Area flamenco scene in the 1970s, when he and Rachel's mother a dancer were known in their neighborhood as the King and Queen of Spain. Serva who evidently has a passion for Jewish women as well as for the soul of Andalucia is a true rolling stone, self-centered and always a little distant. His no sin to become attached to yet his playing is angelic.

Gypsy Davy is the Tel Aviv-based Ms. Jones attempt to reconcile the strands of family art and fate in her father's life and her own. As much it is as elusive as a breeze on a hot afternoon in Morón de la Frontera. The guitar fantasies of Serva and his mentor Diego del Gastor are worth the price of admission and the filmmaker creates her own emotional embroidery to accompany them. Highly recommended. See it at the Roda also on July 28.

So you think you know everything you need to know about Roman Polanski? Filmmaker Laurent Bouzereau begs to differ. The maker of *Chinatown*, *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Pianist* sits in a room in Switzerland, across from his friend and gaoler inquisitor Andrew Braunsberg and spins out his life story — from his escape from the Krakow ghetto in WWII to the murder of his wife Sharon Tate to his Los Angeles statutory rape charge, now finally dismissed. *Roman Polanski: A Film Memoir* is fleshed out with perspicuch, chosen scenes from the director's films, but Polanski's face is always the focus of the action. A remarkable portrait of the artist and his amazingly checkered life, in his own words. See it on August 2 at the Roda.

Marty Glickman "the first jock turned-broadcaster" gained his original notoriety when as a teenage Jewish American from New York, he traveled to Berlin to compete in the 1936 Olympic Games (aka "Hitler's Olympics"). The US Olympic Committee showed extraordinary cowardice in dropping him from his place in the 400-meter relay at the last minute (some say to appease the Führer) but the tenaciously competitive Glickman went on to become a pioneer sportscaster on radio and TV. Ha ha you have to blame for Marv Albert. There's a world of sports memories in James Freedman's *Glickman* which shows at the Roda on July 29.

But enough of the past. How are things on the poor fringes of Greater Israel (hint: days you might ask? Ami Livne's *Shavuja* and Nurith Levari's *Ameer Got His Gun* have the answer and it isn't pretty. Kamel Najer (played by Adnan Abu Wadi) the protagonist of *Shavuja* is a Bedouin living in a metal-and-plywood shack outside Beer Sheva in the desert of Southern Israel, and working as a gofer security guard at a bus station. He is underestimated by everyone, including the government. Observing Kamel, we learn that it doesn't matter how long your ancestors have lived in a place, if you don't have title documents the state can take it away. Meanwhile, in the village of Sakhnin in the Lower Galilee, a mild mannered young man named Ameer Abu Rin joins the Israeli army out of patriotism. He perseveres despite the "dirty Arab" teasing of his comrades. Says Ameer "It's my country and I'd defend it more than I'd defend myself." *Ameer Got His Gun* screens at the Roda on August 1. *Shavuja* is there on August 4.

Also worth a look: *The Moon Is Jewish*, Michal Goldman's documentary profile of a previously anti-Semitic Polish soccer hooligan named Pawel who discovers he is actually Jewish, then abruptly converts to Orthodox Judaism ("The souls of all my ancestors woke up in me"). Alan Traina's drama *Broken* which puts a Jewish teacher against the antagonistic class of suburban Paris high-school kids, with disastrous results and Lee Khazen's equally histrionic *Kaddish for a Friend* about an Arab immigrant youth and contemporary Berlin learning to relate to a pugnacious Russian-Jewish WWII veteran. All of the above "mad-Zionist hoodlum" pics play the Roda Theatre.

On the lighter side: Bradley Leong's agreeably silly multicult sitcom *Dorfman*, starring Sara Rue as a Los Angeles wallflower who falls for her Egyptian neighbor Elliott Gould, who appears in person at San Francisco's Castro Theatre on Sunday July 22, to receive the festival's Freedom of Expression Award (others as Deb Dorfman's father — it'll never make his highlight reel *Dorfman* screens at the Roda on July 31. Need more cinematic hugs? Try *The Day I Sent Your Heart* a French comedy in which self-centered Parisian noodges Melanie Laurent and Michel Blanc get on each others nerves. August 2 at the Roda.

The Jewish Film Festival — which begins on Thursday, July 19 in San Francisco and then rolls out in the East Bay on July 28 — utilizes seven different Bay Area venues including the Oakland Art Museum (August 3) and the Pacific Film Archive. See SFJFF.org for the latest info and full schedule.

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Legendary songwriter Doc Pomus in the documentary *A.K.A. Doc Pomus*

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MOVIES & THEATERS

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OPENING

Bill Boyds Adirondack (113 minutes) Le Monde — Arthur Schnitzler's 1897 play about a connected full circle of lovers is a metaphor for the spread of syphilis. A contemporary New York, but retro-director Alexis Lloyd is not the one to do it. Some of the inspired dialogue you will hear (this year, so not the books colorful over it and mostly enters a rather. That's what we're up against. Among the large cast of players are (all IMDb) are Ingeborga Rapkinaitis, Jason Bay, brothers Glenn Close Jr. as Hector and Cordelia Holland whose naturalistic performances is welcome. Otherwise a dark movie for nonexplosion. 108 m. (J. J.)

Crazy Wisdom: The Life & Times of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche Informative & overmarketable documentary traces the journey of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche — he formed a Buddhist family man (1939-1987) whose mission to the West, especially the United States starting in the 1960s brought a new spiritual outlook to many the baby Boomers and created such lasting effects as Naropa Institute and Shambhala. Trungpa's team rigly enigmatic personalities and abilities he drank too much definitely around his own private paranormal joy, and filled him with favorite stories. Talks up much of guidance/direction Diana Rose Brown. Film, although another adhered explained it clumsily. "The teaching was, there is no certainty. Worth a look for the curious. (BS) mat.) (K.V.)

Uncle Robert Half Salonist, the cinematic point of view keeps suburban angst returning to the soul of Warren Beatty and Lee Bunny Mellamby with the story of Abe Weinstemes (Jeremy Gelbert) a Metropolitan man-child whose search for love must away. If Robert Bresson were born middle-aged Jewish in the Midwestern in the Sixties, Absolutely or As Nature Bathsheba might name around the the But he wasn't so instead we're treated to Abe's turn in leading brothel his action figures, his frenzied his Best Coke the parents (Christopher Walken and Mia Farrow) with about by Dad, his neighbors and the women in the Indiana as (Selma Blair). Aching homers all around superbly by Gerber, Blair and Donna Murphy as Abe's admin-hostile fairy godmother. Probably writer-director Solondz' most accessible comedy, although he laughs, as usual, verge on tyrannical despair. 85 mm. (J.K.V.)

The Dark Knight Rises In this sequel to 2008's wildly popular *The Dark Knight*, the formerly mute Batman (Christian Bale) returns to Gotham to protect the city from an evil terrorist. Directed by Christopher Nolan, written by Nolan and Robert S. Goyer, also starring Tom Hardy, Michael Caine, Gary Oldman and Anne Hathaway. (165 min.)

Farewell, My Queen Part 1 The continuous tension of watching this "other side of history" drama set in the midst of the French Revolution is in knowing that movie Antoinette (Diane Kruger) and most of the rest of the royal court at Versailles are about going to lose their heads. But the focus of writer-director Benoît Jacquot's sensuous costume drama is Sidonie Laborde (Léa Seydoux). The daughter's modest means, sheltered life and wide eyes we notice the aesthetic angle, behind-the-scenes glimpses as Filmmaker Jérôme Clarke, the School of Paris) has always had a knack for directing actresses, and Both Seydoux and Kruger luxuriate in the end-of-an-era roles, with major major by Virginie Ledoyen as Gabrielle de Polignac, the court playgirl. One of grosjean's best. (99 min.) (K.V.)

Instead A more unsophisticated beautiful young woman (Frankie Pinto) gets shocked from the Bible's countryside of Appalachian Indiana by a rich boyfriend, businessman from England (Rik Aliyeed and Paul Laurie). But her transition is bigger, her romance and respectability are different, and different. It's director Michael Winterbottom's suddenly conscious, contemporary adaptation of Thomas Hardy's novel Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and it's Bon-ces Porto — in her torn role since Slumdog Millionaire — bottles up her emotions and goat with her eyes in the title part, yet we understand everything she's telling us. For Winterbottom movie buffs (The Trip, The Killer Inside Me), this second stab at Hardy is tighter and more emotionally invested than his 1998 Jude. Extra added attractions: the thrilling Indian location scenery and the music score by Amit Trivedi and Shilpa Ranabadyali. Bonnie Scott collaborated (113 min.) (K.V.)

ONGOING

Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter Let's see if we got this straight: An epidemic of vampirism, born in the South among ancient slave owners, is threatening to overwhelm mid-19th-century America and it's up to Honest Abe (Benjamin Walker) to use his tall-spitting axe to stop the evil inside it renders in a decisive conflict, aka the Civil War. Whoever has all the potential to be a hilarious, smart spoof of history (and the distrust for same in the audience) but Timur Bekmambetov working from a script by colonial Seth Grahame-Smith (author of Pride and Prejudice and Zombies. Taken the inane way Bonni and Isaac a just another because mash with vamps, playing around the landscape at warp speed while the latest Abe cast (Dominic Cooper, Rufus Sewell, Mary Elizabeth Winstead) must play behind in matter-of-fact and colorless. A waste of perfectly good comic material. (105 min.)

The Amazing Spider-Man Mostly the prequel to Marc Webb's ending superhero phenomenal the same point of view as The Avengers. But as Young Peter Parker (rumbling, cool British email Andrew Garfield) gets bit by a radioactive spider and gradually turns into the Spider-Man we all know and sometimes love while tangling with mad scientist Dr. Curt Connors (Rhys Ifans, also looking bewildered to be in this) and increasing money blood. Stan Stacy (Emma Stone) Aside from the thrilling, light scenes in the sewers with Lizard Man, the movie maintains a somber mist that gets whiplash-wacky director Marc Webb has taken you in. Sensuously by a web of writers led by James Vanderbilt, featuring Oliver Leary, Martin Sheen and Sally Field. (136 min.) (K.V.)

Arsenal of the Brothers Wild Just the contents of a dresser, the wondrous, hallucinatory family story by Guillaume René Zahlin. Six-year-old Hunkapuppy (played beautifully by first-timer Queensland Wells) and her brothers-down (other York (Dwight Kemp, also a non-actor) live a precarious existence in a Louisiana Gulf Coast on Bonnie Village called the Bathtub, our separated by colorful hard-to-define neighbors and Eckerdt, to Hushpuppy's care. By nightmares of chandeliers, around animals. But big changes are coming. The child's adventures — adapted by Zahlin and Lucy Alibar from the latter's stage play, Juicy & Delicious — and on the trappings of a fairy tale, a child's point of view of a place even the most prosaic grownup would find disquieting. The monster parts are filled by perfectly cast amateurs, and the music score by Dan Romer and Ben Bromfe is superb. A one-of-a-kind experience. (91 min.) (K.V.)

Arsenal Artist Jack Smith combines scenes from filmmaker Michael Linnebach Film a Silent ran with the comic misleader study a hilarious artist of East Texas Beer to a bare-bones guitarist Everyone in the Wide Heart of Carthage is gossiping music and cast believe fatal romance secret and hasty bachelor Bernie Tiede (movie), she become the most talent and confident of the moment old fish tasty in love, Marjorie Nugent, Elderley MacLaine) And the tongues really start wagging when Marjorie mysteriously disappears. Black, MacLaine, and Matthew McConaughey (in the gung-ho most bad as most in their parts, and the impressive touch is Linklater's decision to let the townsfolk (played by a mixture of actors and amateurs) play themselves as a Greek chorus of gossips. Director Linklater (*The School of Rock, Bernie, Summer Hits* and *Waking Life*) and screenwriter Skip Hollandsworth just kind on up and let 'em gab, and they're wonderful. The comparison with Fargo is apt, except that Bernie

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MET

ton movie Unlikely has delved deeply into his teens stints before with Stalker and Kismet and Girlfriend. Slick amused for the and therefore to see James Baker sing his song "Friends Who Need to Be Dated." A whimper. (178 min.) (K.V.)

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel Ensemble comedy Steve a Brave of Britons who heather to spend their retirement in India. Directed by John Madden; adapted by Ol Parker from the Sonet Thery *Foolish Things* by Deborah Moggach; starring Judi Dench Bill Nighy Maggie Smith Dev Patel, and Tom Wilkinson. (124 min.)

Brave Pixar's big summer tentpole this time around focusing on a rambunctious princess who is trying to defend her kingdom. Directed by Mark Andrews, Brenda Chapman, and Steve Purcell; written by Andrews, Chapman, Purcell and Irene Mecchi; with voices by Kelly Macdonald Billy Connolly Emma Thompson and Kelly Macdonald. (100 min.)

A Cat in Paris French-language animated comedy Brave a young Parisian girl versus cat leads her into a mystery. Directed by Jean-Loup Felicioli and Alain Gagnol; written by Gagnol with last voices of Dominique Blanc and Steve Suissanna. (70 min.)

Crazy Eyes A rare example of the "daredevil LA. movie once thought cursed. Passionate martyrs are glorified Zach (Lukas Haas) meets the title female, aka heiress (Madeline Zima), and together they explore the downside of "typical ca-La-La Land" behaviors with their boosted friends. Zach is suffering

from too much money. too much booze. too much dope the many girlfriends, and not enough good dialogue. courtesy Dave Navarro, Rashe Mantlby, and premise-giver Sherman. Everyone lives in the hills or on the Hollywood Walk of every scene. Shows of stunted brain scared in a medium. (1 hr. 4 m.) (K.V.)

Joe Age. Professional Indie Mace fan with all traits of age in the latest installment in the popular sex mated franchise, this time around vets Spencer Massey, Sal, and Bugsy (indulging in a Kobe-inspired adventure to find a new home after their continent-hopper away. Directed by Steve Monroe and Mike Thurmeier; written by Michael Berg and Aaron Fuchs; starring Jay Wilson as Ray Stevens, John Leguizamo, and Denis Leary. (84 min.)

The Intouchables Take the basic premise of Driving Miss Daisy and move it to contemporary Paris. Change Miss Daisy into a rich quadriplegic who runs Francoise Cluzet), turn his faithful servant into a tough African immigrant from the housing projects of Hart Sad Yasmin Ammeur), and you have this heart-tugging French comic character study is actually funny and well constructed. As predictable and corny as it might seem, the rapprochement between the Driving Miss Daisy and the ghetto mother gets only performances from both Antoine Cluzet and Omar Sy—approximate Sy who won a Cesar for Best Actor for his role, and the screenplay by the writing-directing team of Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano benefits from upbeat & comic timing and immeasurable little grace notes. So it's based on a true story? Who cares? Everything clicks, even the Bolero big cast. Anne le Ny Audrey Fleurot, all. (112 min.) (K.V.)

Katy Perry: Part of Me 3-D documentary following the pop singer and follows entrapment on—and teenage dating the California heiress Directed by Dan Cutforth and Jane Lipsitz.

Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted Third installment of the animated kids' series, continuing on with our heroes as they join a traveling circus on Europe. Directed by Eric Darnell, Tom McGrath, and Conrad Vernon; written by Darnell and Noah Baumbach, with voices by Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, Steve Schwimmer, and Sasha Baron Cohen.

Magic Mike Showgirls-esque slathering dramedy based on star Channing Tatum's real-life experience as a male dance dancer. (That sound you hear is every straight woman and gay man frantically Fandango-ing.) Directed by Steven Soderbergh; written by Reid Carolin; also starring Alex Pettyfer and Steve Myers. (120 min.)

Men in Black 3 Same silly sci-fi premise as before, but with much more buttery-brown effects. These aliens might justify seeing this. It's real shiny not that plot. Agent J (Will Smith) Men travels back to 1969 to prevent evil as Bad the friend Lowjaw Clement. Josh Brolin and

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Earth and killing a promise Jeniter (Josh Brolin) of 7's 2012 partner Agent K (Tommy Lee Jones). Brave a famous Lee anticipation is very good in some premise Skarsbourg's turn as Griffin, one agency's lady feel is a bad. Also in the bright toes Emma Thompson as Agent O Barry Sonnenfeld (*Addams Family*) returns to established zeno-steampunk style by veteran Barry Rosenbaum, Brave is accompanied by Steve Bacon (Tim Lee), Jeff Nathanson and Michael Soccio adapted from a comic book by Lowell Cunningham. (106 min.) (K.V.)

Mauricio Kagel's Film the Hotelized and of the Work And chart sensibility (The Audioslave Limited, *The Life Aquatic with Samel Zissou*) comes the tale of Sixty Rara Hayward) and Sam (Jared Gilman), a pair of pre-pubescent runaways who glee everyone on the New England island of New Penzance in the summer of 1965. The Newbitter's precious Bluebird & and the story (by Andersson and Roman Coppola) are extremely with its Wes Anderson/Edith Wharton blend. Might have been better as an animation à la Fantastic Mr. Fox. But get dressed in coordinated yellow rain-wear rating, than the story. The likes are would have to miss out on Bill Murray, Francis McDormand, Steve Yeller, Tilda Swinton, Jason Schwartzman, Harvey Keitel, and Bob Balaban as writers presidential authority figures. Closer to think of it, that might not be such a bad thing. Starts this weekend for and school. (97 min.) (K.V.)

People Like Us Family-themed drama gets maximum mileage out of the old "hard-knot sibling. Kevser as a misguided shallow running the of sack (Chris Pine) enters a Shamanistic journey back home for his estranged father's funeral There he reconnects with his sister (Elizabeth Banks) and his semi-damn survivor of a mother (Michelle Pfeiffer), and determines to make up for his apparent, adrenal-year-old boy (Michael Hall D'Addario) of the type who always adrenal movies and this. Surprisingly it all hangs together under the guidance of director Alex Kurtzman, who wrote the screenplay with Roberto Orci and Mary Lambert. There's absolutely no reason why anyone (neither Ida a formulaic story like this, except for their mysterious thing called chemistry. It works perfectly. (115 min.) (K.V.)

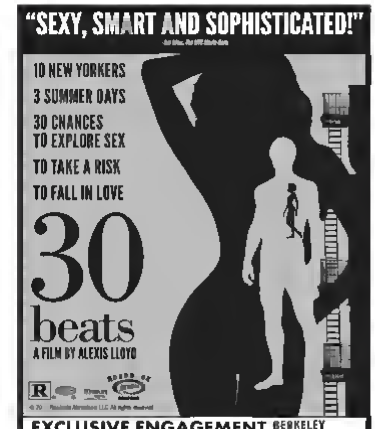
Rated-R Ages The hormone-mad Brave Spendoncelet of the girl in late-1950s Hollywood (specialty-casual in male thought and her wannabe rocker boyfriend (the 7 ago Brenda get the sets. Brave-Pete Brave boy treatment from Adam Shankman, who also directed the screen-musical version of *A Hairspray*. But Rated are divergent. Alec Baldwin and Robert Brand are a dad and Mom's business partners at the Brave Club on a Pau Bismuth is the role of a sleazy promise Jennifer. Best musical Brave Mary J Blige (one of a Sunset Strip pole-dancing club. Most awkward years-than-memoir Tom Cruise as a spaced aging rock star every time he's on shirt the action jokers to a crime. The real savior of the dance is fast-motion vertigo hard-work, hits by such Brave as Journey Girl Leopard Foreigner, and REO Speedwagon reworked by the cast, who reportedly did their own singing. Also notable: Mario Abercrombie as stage director rockstarling and Cat Brave Zeta-Jones as the mayor's wife, a role-shoot also well unsuited. Justin Theroux, Jamie Lee, and Chris D'Arienzo adapted the screenplay from D'Arienzo's stage premise. (113 min.) (K.V.)

Safety Not Guaranteed Actress Aubrey Plaza is the best thing about this. My knack-and-it-dissolutionary daughter three-semicolon-led investigative report ers. Plaza's Darius obnoxious snarky-eager Jake M. Johnson, and nerd Kenya Sand in the trail as a rural eccentric who claims to have a time machine (actor/filmmaker Mark Duplass of *Baghead*, *Cyrus* and *Humpday* fame). The real premise they all need to accomplish is to get laid. Underwritten and overplayed, it's the sort of movie that makes auteurlicious gush at Sundance (I Brave that's most of their jobs) and yawn everywhere else. But Plaza remains convinced Darius Jones the whole thing as a romantic goes may hold her key to salvaging something from it. Extremely ay by Derek Connolly. Directed by Colin Trevorrow. (84 min.) (K.V.)

Savages Oliver Stone returns to his pulp beginnings. *The Hand Salvatore* in a lousy mess with this brown-bird-dy premise Brave two Laguna Beach weed dealers (Aaron Johnson, Taylor Kitsch) share shared girlfriend (Blake Lively) who lose Mexican drug lord (Benicio Del Toro) the vicious head of the high drug cartel (Salma Hayek, hyperventilating) a best DEA agent (Dalton Travolta), and assorted drug-cyborg squabbling over turf with the beef Brave of Stone's vision. as sacking direct and amusement in giving Don Winslow's book of the same name adapted by screenwriter Shane Salerno. The novelist, and the Friends. The summer drive-by lukewarmness treatment. It wants some of the dimension dialogue since the invention of psilocybin. It's a quality premise from Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps. Also with promise Olivie and Emile









(Brach (127 min.)
Seeking a Friend for the End of the World Earth will be destroyed by an asteroid in 21 days and the end can't come fast enough for Dodge (Steve Carell), a lonely novelist whose wife has left him — he made dinner away by accident. But then when all is lost, his Dodge's most beautiful days comes Penny (Keira Knightley), a blissfully disadvantaged neighbor with a heart to dog named Sorry. They take a dramatic but sprawled road trip Jamaica apocalyptic America and discover true love. Sad and funny, but now unconvincingly mumble a serendipity by screen-turned-filmmaker Lorene Scafaria (on his Even 6 there aren't really only 8 few days until the world explodes), you wouldn't want to make your tenacious love on Junk like this. Cinema-ing Travis Coates, William Peterson, Derek Luke and Patton Oswalt. (101 min.)

Take This Waltz Sarah Polley, whose blistering directorial debut, Away from Her (2006), showcased the separation of a husband and wife in their 60s, turns her attention to a married couple in their 20s (Seth Rogen and Michelle Williams) and the woman's wandering hero's flair with their neighbor across the male (Luke Kirby). Paying Rogers, a perfect small romcom with Williams, is soulful and largely nonverbal performer, was a risky move — and their on-screen chemistry often seems forced (there most touching, innumerous all take place through a closed window). Yet the movie is here built by Williams' more performances as she yearning, fearful quirky with its opening shots of an apartment. The can also remind Sarah Silverman impressive in her straight and as the husband's short-tongued alcoholic sister. (116 min.) (J.L.)

Yes Seth MacFarlane-without comedy Would a man marvel to lady bear comes in live (technically a Bellaire by MacFarlane, with by Mel Gibson, Alec Sultan and Wellesley Wild, starring Mark Wahlberg, Mila Kunis, and Joel McHale.

To Rome With Love Woody Allen's (notes in Europe. March Paris' May (notes Barcelona, Midnight in Paris) got stuck in a watered-over pack (I maintain) cause with the frustratingly with-ish haphazard y-holistic ironic pastiche about an ambitious group of characters explored in Allen's idea of the Eternal City. Best of the vignettes is Roberto Benigni's as an ordinary man suddenly and inexplicably elevated to celebrity status. But the central sad meeting without visiting American Jesse Eisenberg, Ellen Page, Greta Gerwig, and Alec Baldwin. In all mid-than Cinema stories — is unusually the one we wanted to see carried across the finish line. It doesn't make it, though, and neither does this silly businessman with Penelope Cruz as his kooky, busty callgirl bedeviling Alessandro Tiberi and his new bride Alessandra Mastronardi. The bit about the Allen character's nervous breakdown on a flight to America on Italian overseas who can only sing in the shower (Fabio Armiliato) would never have made the cut in Allen's prime period in the 1970s. Also with Judy Davis and Alison Pill. (112 min.) (R.V.)

Tyler Perry's Madea's Witness Protection America's favorite cross-dressing cinematic returns, this time as the unwitnessed in a Wall Street whistleblower's witness protection program. Antonio and starring Tyler Perry (now with Eugenia Levy and Denise Richards). (114 min.)

Your Sister's Sister Your Sister's Sister centers on a splinterly complex relationship which is explored with gentle humor and caution for the sensitivities (mud and more) of the characters as blithely as to each other. Like Director Lynn Shelton's previous Humpday, this is a film that's made by its performances, which are all wonderful. The best moments are the smallest, deeply Homewood friends trading embarrassing tokens without the climax (aside midnight made between housemates. At the big moments Sister made by blurting a lie, and characters believe it more that both the deeply familiar humanity that gives such state-of-the-films their best and most powerful. But it's a small, beautifully world film that touches on a number of deep issues (grief, family forgiveness) without succumbing to shtick. Six out 8

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ONE-NIGHT STANDS

THURSDAY, JULY 19

Harvest (72 min.) (1940.) In Hindi with English subtitles. The Himmat Post, Raj Kapoor & the Golden Age of Indian Cinema (Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, 7 PM)

Yesterday Tomorrow: The Story of Carmencita (102 min., 2010) With opening music by Dawn Bevelaqua (formerly Sweet Cinema, 49th St. and Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 8:45)

Variety (120 min., 1958.) Fleischacker (UA Berkeley, 7 & 9:30)

FRIDAY, JULY 20

My Own Private Idaho (104 min., 1991.) Sun Roddy (PFA, 7 PM)

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Mon-Thu 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 9:45
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Mon-Thu 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 9:45
HAPPY NO (UNRATED) (R)
Mon-Thu 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 9:45
THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL (PG-13)
Mon-Thu 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 9:45
Screening Lounge
6:30 & 9:45 shows are 21+ Only.
THE INTOUCHABLES (R)
Mon-Thu 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 9:45
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7:05 & 9:40 are 21+ Only.
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Tony Braxton (84 min.) (2012.) (PFA, 8:05)

SATURDAY, JULY 21

The Girl with a Suitcase (113 min., 1961.) In Italian with English subtitles. Bellissima: Leading Ladies of the Italian Screen (PFA, 7:30)

Jogo (136 min., 2004.) In Arabic with English subtitles. The Eternal Poet, Raj Kapoor & the Golden Age of Indian Cinema (PFA, 8:75)

SUNDAY, JULY 22

All in this Tea (77 min., 2007.) With dialogue in Mandarin, Amoy, and Hokkien with English subtitles. Lee Kitchen Jr. and Lisa Hsiang with tea experts Lena Tan supports Found Lee Hallows after the screening. Always for Pleasure: The Films of Lee Kitchen (PFA, 5:30)

Brave Velvet (126 and 1935.) Cool World (PFA, 7:05)

The Roy Shedlow: Pioneers of Early Stop-Motion Homewood. Featuring eight short films. Berkeley Underground Film Society (708 Gilman St., Berkeley, 7:30)

MONDAY, JULY 23

Captain without (216 min., 1947.) Forbidden Thrills (Forbidden Island, Alameda, 7:30)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25

Spur City (106 min., 1945.) In Italian and German with English electronic subtitles. Bellissima: Leading Ladies of the Italian Screen (PFA, 7 PM)

The Tempest (2012.) Summer Shakespeare Festival Live (Ruths Cinemas Cerrito, El Cerrito, 7:00)

Urban roots (2013.) Preceded by potluck and music hour at 6:30 p.m., followed by Homewood (Homeplot Hall, Oakland, 7:30)

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BRINGING THE HEAT TO OAKLAND

Two nights of Reverend Horton Heat at The Uptown

By Rachel Swan

The name "Reverend Horton Heat" is actually a variation of Jim Heath, with a title added at the beginning and one consonant removed from the end — and Horton Heath certainly seems like the kind of person who would show off the ends of words. Playing at Oakland's Uptown Nightclub last weekend, he held court for two nights in costumes that might befit a high-school dance in rural Texas: embroidered cowboy shirt on Friday, necktie on Saturday — widows peak pointing severely at the audience. Heat's voice sounds slightly tarnished by age but that's only enhanced his pop culture cachet. Especially in Oakland, where nostalgia-based trends seem to have real staying power. So-called "psychobilly" and "punkabilly" music might be a novelty elsewhere, but in these parts they thrive.

Or so one would think, judging from the filled-to-capacity crowds at Uptown, a medium-size venue with a fairly small stage and a narrow showroom — an eighties jukebox on the Heat concerts were, it's almost more advantageous to watch the show from TV screens that dangle over the bar. But that didn't deter the hundreds who flocked there to catch the Corpus Christi born singer-songwriter and his trio, which consisted, as always, of stand-up bassist Jimbo Wallace and drummer Scott Churilla. After a crisp set from supporting rock band Supersonkers, Heat emerged at 11:30 p.m. over a pool of canned horns. He started each night with a wallop, cycling through the best known hits early on, inciting responses from the front row and dutifully ignoring a fight that broke out in the crowd on Friday (and which resulted in two arrests). The stage lights twinkled, casting a red bordello hue over the grooves in Heat's forehead. The 53-year-old singer beamed.

Over his three-decade career, Reverend Heat never quite achieved mainstream popularity (though his songs have wound up on car commercials and in the MTV animated series *Beavis and Butt-head* (whose characters wholeheartedly approved of his song "Wiggle Stick"). His s perfected the counterculture rockabilly sound that had its renaissance in the 1990s, when fans of fast-paced punk rock suddenly became enamored of old-timey country music, and began filling their CD collections with remastered Hank Williams or Johnny Cash LPs. Heat endeared himself to that market by combining attributes of punk rock with the unused siblings of his predecessors. His songs often have the blistering tempos and fusillade drum fills of punk rock but



Reverend Horton Heat went live at Oakland

the chords are poached from older blues or murder ballads — Heat's music is riddled with flat fives and diminished sevenths. Similarly, his lyrics have the same tragic lilt as country, except they're grittier. Heat will occasionally sing about a woman who done him wrong — "Wiggle in the Bed, Did You Go with My Toothbrush?" is his most famous tale of a broken relationship — but he's more likely to celebrate alcohol or narcotics. One of his best numbers is "Rules of Cocaine" from the irreverent 1993 album *The Full Custom Gospel Sounds of the Reverend Horton Heat*.

Such references go over well in Oakland, where Heat's audience consists largely of guys with fifties-style pompadours and their pinup girlfriends. According to Uptown owner Larry Trujillo, it was Heat's first time playing in Oakland — he usually graces larger San Francisco clubs like The Fillmore — so the two-night booking was a coup. And fans shook giddily as he rumbled through opener "Psychobilly Freakout" and the swing tune "It's Martini Time." At Saturday's show, the Reverend was just a speck on the horizon, as hundreds of heads bobbed up and down like identical junk in the boxes.

The only disappointment according to one die-hard fan was that Heat started out too strong, so his ninety-minute performances seemed like one long dumbmmdle. But other people found that appealing. Midway through Friday's set he reunited the slow-dance portion of the show marked by the *boom-she-bop* ballad "In Your Wildest Dreams." It's a love song that sounds almost like a ravishment — *My breath on your neck/The touch of my hand/You'll awake in a room of steam*. Heat crooned benny teeth on his unmodified thin twang "in our wildest" — but the notes rattled so mctuously from his Gretsch guitar that audience members were transfixed. Men swayed languidly, sloshing plastic cups of beer while a couple in the back found just enough floor space to do a slow pas de deux. He followed that with "Jezebel," another chestnut that he originally covered on his 1994 LP *Liquor in the Front* (he told the crowd that his favorite version is the one Ricky Ricardo performed on *I Love Lucy*). Heat's version is gruffer and more thunderous: the guitar lines bent, the rhythm sped up. The melody overpowered by Churilla's kick drum and ride cymbal. But for the lyrics, which are larded with internal rhymes and Biblical references it could almost be a punk song.

Judicious embellishments to old traditions are the key to Heat's longevity, though his real talent is for directly imitating, rather than adapting, his antecedents. Heat doesn't even have to chatter much onstage, because his persona carries the day — he's managed to mesh a kind of personal lore, at t ends, by devolving into Texas preacher caricature, but also through his lyrics. "Rules of Cocaine" is about a drug bounty that falls from the sky, as he's pulling carrots and corn from a Texas farm. "Devil's Chasing Me" is about a devil who pulls up in a long black limousine and tries to goad Heat into a Faustian bargain. His songs have the same ornamental appeal of Southern Gothic furniture and the characters who populate them ring familiar for any fan of country: waifish women, self-flagellating alcoholics, sinister female fatales, swindlers in diamond studded shoes. It's little surprise that he'll go over well in an area where much of the hipster culture revolves around fantasies of rural America (red meat flannel shirts, trucker hats) or of the working class.

And Heat's Oakland fans were indeed representative of a specific subculture. While Friday's show seemed a little more casual, Saturday night drew a lot of people in full rockabilly regalia. The women wore Cleopatra eyeliner and Bettie Page haircuts; the guys wore leather jackets and austerely slicked back hair: the only thing distinguishing them from 1950s concertgoers was the conspicuous presence of tattoos. While a small sampling of the back row revealed that many had crossed the bridge from San Francisco, others said they lived right down the street. It was the first time that many Oaklanders had seen an A list rockabilly headliner perform within walking distance of their apartments.

That certainly wasn't lost on Trujillo, who peeks at himself in bringing big headliners to the East Bay. And this time he really scored. Considering that Heat has played both The Fillmore and The Warfield, this two night run was no small feat. (One Twitter detractor dubbed it "laugh times.") But the Reverend seemed unmovable. He lengthened his sets by thirty minutes, starting at 11:30 p.m. instead of midnight, and ending right on the clock struck one. On Friday he encored with a rousing cover of Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues," just as fire police cars rolled up to arrest the two expelled brawlers. Those of us who'd spent the last hour and a half in other capacity were quickly catapulted to the present.

HE'S MANAGED TO CREATE A KIND OF PERSONAL LORE, NOT ONLY BY DEVOLVING INTO TEX-AS-PREACHER CARICATURE, BUT ALSO THROUGH HIS LYRICS.

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com

BROMANCE AND GREAT WHITE BUFFALO

An Oxnard band finds success in LA, and an ardent following in the Bay Area

By Christopher Dancy

The four members of Great White Buffalo ambled into Thee Parkside last Thursday a few hours before the headlining show blew down the street at Bottom of the Hill. After trying to order drinks and hamburgers in the toasty, empty, pre-happy hour bar and complaining about the surly dude in the kitchen (the up-and-coming rock n rollers dug into their French fries and launched a frenetic discussion about their many time-traveling, and jamming, adventures.

It's been a big couple months for the members of Great White Buffalo. They just finished a new EP, which was engineered by Phil Allen, who recently won a Grammy for his work on Adnim's 21 (GWB's singer and rhythm guitarist Graham Bonkmiller went to college with Allen, who works at a studio down the street from his apartment in West Hollywood.) Last month the band got extra exposure thanks to an appearance on Spinner on AOL music blog.

That was an adrenalin shot for the two founding members Stephen Johnson and Bonkmiller, who both grew up in Oxnard and relocated to Los Angeles. Though they were raised in the same town, Bonkmiller and Johnson didn't know each other that well until forming Great White Buffalo about two and a half years ago. At that time, it consisted entirely of Oxnardians all of them alumni of Marshall High School. Eventually they replaced original drummer Russ Hordy with Angelino Rinh Carrillo, who showed up to meet the band on a motorcycle. Johnson joked that Carrillo looked so cool rolling up on his vintage Honda that he wasn't sure if he wanted Carrillo in the band or if he wanted to date him.

Original bassist Colin Regan left earlier this year and now Blake La Grange on audio engineer who recorded the band's original EP, plays bass with them live with his long curly hair. La Grange is an obvious, albeit hippie-zeppelin-ian Blake on the TV show *Workaholics*, a fact he unhappily acknowledges. Judging by the band members conversations it's easy to tell they've spent a lot of time together. Their rapid fire back and forth isn't as much a finishing of each other's sentences as it is a series of interruptions. More importantly they know how to banter. Asked how the group name up with its name, Johnson replied, "We kinked around a bunch of names in the beginning. Graham's sister suggested [Great White Buffalo], she did *not* tell us it was in *Hot Tub Time Machine*."

"Which *I still haven't seen*," Bonkmiller said.

Besides their easy rapport, the guys are also a solid well-rehearsed rank band. Their music is crisp, tight and consistently catchy.



Great White Buffalo — Stephen Johnson

At Thursday's show Great White Buffalo cranked out an hour-long set that could garner comparisons to a variety of hugely successful modern rockers. Kings of Leon, The Strokes, and Foo Fighters for starters. Bonkmiller sings in an oddly soothing baritone that the band's press materials described as "unhung." I would go further and say his voice and lyrics have a late-night drunken ball-licking, melancholy quality that seems to be constantly yearning for something better.

The whole band plays hard, sincerely and convincingly. The songs are concise, but the quartet knows when to kick up the volume and distortion before a turn becomes monotonous. Aside a few numbers, a bunch of girls started dancing in front of the stage. They didn't stop until the show ended.

Johnson is probably the most fun to watch. He simply looks like the lead guitarist in a rock n' roll band. He's tall and lanky. He has shaggy brown hair and an unkempt beard. He's clearly having fun and he never stops bopping around the stage, even though he has torn ACL, which will consign the band to the recording studio for most of August. On one song he played a quick solo using a beer bottle as a slide. On another, a new tune called "Sinking to You" he laid on spacious layering reminiscent of old school Coldplay.

At this point Great White Buffalo is definitely considered a Los Angeles band, which some people might find offensive, even though they shouldn't. These guys look like a band you would see playing on a farm and that's not a bad thing. They played a legit crowd at The Strokes' all-star tribute, Euphoria. And they owned a slow dirty version of Queens of the Stone Age's "Make It Wit Chu" that beat the snot out of the original. La Grange only learned the song that day, he said, but he still managed to work in some of his best fills of the show.

Bonkmiller and Johnson say they are still singing, driving expectations and providing a small glimmer of hope for the woman who trailed them in hot pursuit. Johnson had to keep moving when he strutted across the club because every time he planted his feet he was basically accosted by fans.

To be honest though, who could blame them? ■

Editor@EastBayExpress.com







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SMOOTH RETURNS

A smooth Ocean a smooth soulful post-mortem and a rock band smoothly soldiers on

Frank Ocean

Channel Orange

This is not a zeitgeisty tale about that *other* reason Frank Ocean has been in the news lately. Google it if you must because it is indeed unprecedented and exemplary of incredible courage and, above all, really *really important* but it mostly serves to distract from the reason any ally is cared in the first place. That is that Ocean is an unbelievably promising performer. It's kind of hard to believe in fact that this is only his first full length, as indelible and expansive as his influence has been over the past couple years. He's written songs for Beyonce and John Legend, guested on two of *Watch the Throne*'s best tracks, and been singin-handlindly responsible for the adjective "smooth"'s return to positive connotation when applied to hip-hop.



Channel Orange is another triumph in a short super album full of them. Strangely intimate, astonishingly well produced deeply familiar (Ocean definitely owes a not insignificant debt of gratitude to Steve Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Prince) and yet somehow completely subversive of prevailing lyrical and music tropes. "Super Rich Kids" may start as a thumping, end-titlish attack on car-worthy electric piano-backed ode to "white lies and white lines" and deliver the album's most straightforward rap (via Odd Future compatriot Earl Sweatshirt) but it punks – cracks open, really – with Ocean's striking, plaintive tenor itself a waning reference to one of his forebears, Mary J. Blige. *I'm searching for a real love* it's neo-soul unbeat the shtick, or maybe it's hip-hop with its humanity laid bare. Either way, it's arresting. The music industry's got a lot to learn from Frank Ocean. In many more ways than one. (Island Def Jam)

— Ellen Cushing

Donny Hathaway

Live + In Performance

"*Donny Hathaway Live* is the best live recording of all time." Lalah Hathaway states in the booklet notes to the new two-disc reissue of that 1972 album, and nearly as brilliant follow-up *In Performance*, released posthumously in the Eighties. The recordings on both were culled largely from shows at the Troubadour in LA and New York's Bitter End. Though Hathaway's daughter admits to being biased, she's actually not far off the mark. *Donny Hathaway Live* is rivaled by only one other album: *Ray Charles in Person*, recorded in Atlanta in 1959. No two albums in the annals of African American popular music have better captured the interaction – the call and response – between performer and audience. Listening to them is like going to church and experiencing emotional catharsis.

Hathaway died tragically in 1979 at age 33, but his gospel imbued vocal delivery and ball-like tone had a profound influence on such future stars as Peabo Bryson and Luther Vandross, as well as on the already established Stevie Wonder. When Denny sings any song, he owns it, annotator David Ritz quotes Wonder as having said. Besides Hathaway's groove-based, electric piano-fueled jams "The Ghetto" and "Voices Inside (Everything Is Everything)," the two discs find him placing his highly emotive stamp on such numbers as Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin On," Carole King's "You've Got a Friend," John Lennon's "Jealous Guy" and Leon Russell's "A Song for You." And when the audience joins him vocally midway through Nino Simone's "To Be Young, Gifted and Black," the joy is overwhelming. (Shout! Factory)

— Lee Hildebrand



Little Feat

Rooster Rag

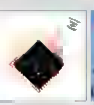
When a band soldiers on despite the loss of a defining member, there is unusually heck to pay. The band is forever fated to be compared by fans and critics to its previous incarnation and/or has to contend with the notion that the remaining members are only continuing in order to receive a paycheck. But that's not the case for Little Feat, a band that just added a sixteenth album to its already-copious discography. Despite the demises of co-founders Lowell George (in 1979) and Richie Hayward (2010), not only did Little Feat carry on undeterred – it flourished.

Rooster Rag builds and builds further refining their spicy, roots gumbo. It's a tangy mix of earthy rock n roll, jazz, blues, gospel old-school Southern funk, and New Orleans rhythms served up with sunny sophistication and some hints of country twang (e.g., "Salome" co-writ by Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter). Fear not fans that keening, razor-sharp guitar sound is still vivid (particularly on the stealth shuffin of "One Breath at a Time") the organ remains thick and rich as the best barbecue sauce and the vocals are still hearty heartfelt and delivered with a deceptively languid drawl. Unlike some roots-rock outfits Little Feat doesn't feel the need to be endlessly boisterous. Little Walter's punchy, "Mellow Down Easy" features no inflections mid-tempo groove that builds in tantalizingly slow increments, and the soloists ride it with command.



Above all though Little Feat isn't coasting on past achievements. *Rooster Rag* can stand with the best efforts of "younger" roots-y combos Los Lobos, The Iguanas and Bottle Rockets. That is no small feat. (Rounder)

— Mark Keresman





The Briones

Never Be the Same

Despite the band's name, its brittle guitar riffs, and its tendency to resist earwormy melodies The Briones singers Jen Black and Aja Blue relish their ability to charm. Most of it derives from the sweet girly pitch of their vocals, which lend innocence to lyrics about addiction and co-dependent relationships. That's best illustrated on "Milk," an up-tempo rock track that oozes pathos. (Black Heart Blue Starr Music)

Anne Estrada

Yolanda

Even in the rather self-selective world of Latin jazz, Ivy vocalists sound as bright or buoyant as Anne Estrada. She sings in both English and Spanish favoring sprightly melodies and light hearted lyrics. Her new album *Yolanda* includes a dreamy cover of a tune from *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* and an accordion laced Beatles medley. Even the lyrics to "Happiness Is a Warm Gun" sound breezy. Well almost. (Feral Flight Productions)

Black Angel

Black Angel Plays The Stones

Santa Clara-based cover band Black Angel couldn't have picked a better time to release a Stones tribute album given that it arrived the same day that rumors about Mick Jagger's romantic hanky with David Bowie first erupted in the blogosphere. Black Angel's lead singer J.C. Martin is no Jagger but him got a bluesily yowly voice that suits songs like "Stray Cat Blues." (self released)

Various Artists

After Midnight Productions Presents the Winter Part II

The latest from this San Francisco-based studio is a patchwork of busy glitchy beats, competent raps, and singers who flit in and out of tune. Rappers Duece Isaac are perfectly capable of staying in the pocket on their come-hither track, "Feel Good Affair" but they should hire someone else to sing their hooks. In contrast, Nino Lucci's Auto-Tune-abused ballad "Heart Break Hotel" is pretty catchy. So is cockney rapper Lucie Gregory who rhymes "metamorphosis" with "organismatic." (After Midnight Productions)

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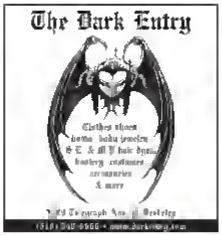
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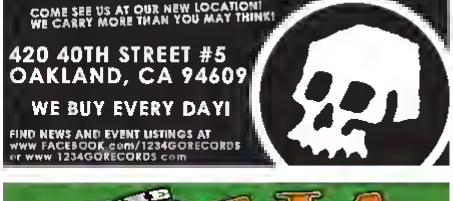
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CONCERTS & CLUBS

THURSDAY 19

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Impressionable Voices: A Benefit for The Uptown: Oakland Anti-Repression Committee with Mad Head, The 21st Century and Kara Beccia. Starry Plough. 9 p.m. $5-$10

Woody Guthrie's American Song a concert dramatization of the Martinez bard on the 40th anniv. of the event; American folk singer Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. 8 p.m., $22.50, $24.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Red Bones dinner jazz with guest Ronnie Wiggins, The Alley. 8 p.m., free

Scott Young/Ben Hallaian Soletet Chris Vadala. 8 p.m. free

Singing' Uke's Hearts **Rod Cabaret** with smash Mandolins, a! sorts from Annie and Solidarity Bills by Dodgi Noor Conservatory's lat campers. Epworth United Methodist Church. 7 p.m. $20

Skip Henderson and Starboard Waltz Grand Lighthouse. 9 p.m. free

Bruce Barnes Band Yoshi's Mandolin Alley. 6:30, 8 & 10 p.m., $10

Rock & Pop

DJ Lobeelie happy hour punk piano. Snow Valerie. 5 p.m. free

The Angels with Weekender the Band Thee! In Peak. Bill's Mile High Club. 8 p.m. $TBA

The Alan Dumas with Brigette Bandstand Great American Cons. Subterranean. Presents. 8 p.m. $10-$15

Presents: and the Bones with Exquisit, Troop Thor, the Serapes Bones. The Uptown. 9 p.m. $8

Snow Since Sunday with Pushing the Sun the Governor. Stork Club. 8 p.m., $8

Tube Jones with Mast Walker and Rockpile Pie. Vitus. 9 p.m. $7

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Lee Dubians with C'Sinea and Antique, Walter by Row-G, The New Patch. 9 p.m., $15-$20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Tash Blues Brass with Fully Fillmore and Nicole Dube. Presents. 8:30 p.m. $10, $15

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Beachwood Sparks with Allah-Las, Sweet Chicks and F. Bird Caves. The Independent. 8 p.m. $18

Jenlie Trent and the Fishpeople Jolie Cafe. 7:30 p.m. free

Mother Day Mandolins, Bonnets with Alan Dykens and Consider The Union Brass. July 19-20. 7 p.m. $20

Walter Band Bonnets & Beans. 8 p.m. $20-$25

Classical & Opera

San Francisco Symphony Presents: "Summer and the Symphony: My Favorite American Composers with pianist Charles Albright and conductor Michael Francis. Davies Symphony Hall. 7:30 p.m., $15-$72

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Paul Chambers with Reuben, Soundfence, Sea Pearls, and DJ Dial Silky Anonymous. 9 p.m. free. Rena 21 p.m., $10 after

Gospel & Avant

Vanilla Bunnie Red Poppy Art House. 8 p.m. $12-$20

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ann Anderson Trio live jazz. Ani Mandolins, 1.30-8:30 p.m. free

Eddie Pasternak Duo with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco. 9 p.m. free

The Marina Vanilla Le Colonial. 7:30 p.m. free

Rock & Pop

The Beveled Children Foundation with Ronna B the BANG BANG and Texas, Rock & Master Music Hall. 7:30 p.m., $5 $8

Bruce Dunn with Wits and Pugs & the Thousand Hotel Utah. 9 p.m. $8

Eddie Money Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 & 10 p.m., $30-$35

Foundations of Wayne with Alan Wilk, David Ammirato Bruce Hall. 8 p.m. $25-$ 50-$75

Paramount with Fierce Creatures, Conveyor, and Evan Jenkyn Bonsers of the Hill. 9 p.m., $10

La Fondaye with Little and Beef Chief. 8 p.m. 9-9 p.m. $8

Bay Blues with The Rift, The Fillmore. 9 p.m. $50

The Shell Corporation with Hooray for Everything, The Mighty Pine, and Why I Hate Jillian Portside. 9 p.m. $7

Spencer Dunn and the Gunther Mattress Tavern. 9 p.m. $5

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Stompy Bones playing "Central Avenue" inspired R&B. Top of the Mark. 7:30-11:30 p.m. $10

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Free 4 Leg Bling Mojoes. 9:30 p.m. free

FRIDAY 20

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Each Piece with Emma Mandolins, Bonnie Cafe. 7 p.m.

Rock it, Mary Zubeck and Snow Band Eagles Hall. 9 p.m. $15

Not an Airplane with Bonnie Bonnets Cafe. 7 p.m. $5-$15

Wayne Mathias a American Song a musical production of the inspired based on the life and music of his iconic American folk singer. Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. 8 p.m. $22.50-$24.50

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Berkeley Arts Festival with live improvisational music. 2133 University Bonnets noon free

Gospel & Vocal

Chris Bonnie Gospel showcase, plus rap, spoken-word, dance, Mandolins, musicians, & more. 8:00 Abel Christian Conservatory. 7 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

GRELLEI and Bonnets 97th Bonnie Gallery. 7:30-9 p.m. $15

Stanley Reily Piedmont Bonnie Company. 8 p.m. $15

Jim Brown Ass Trio Spellebinders. 8:30 p.m. free

Hot n' Martini with Pie Rats, prestidrum. 9 p.m. $15

Ana Dumas The Alley. 9 p.m., free

Bonnie Mandolins Snow Yoshi's Mandolins. 8 & 10 p.m. $26

Kids

The Mandolins, Bonnie Musical Sing-Along Band Center, Bonnie College. 11:30 p.m., $5

Rock & Pop

Bomper with Walter of the Sun Bowl and Butterfly Knives, Shark Club. 9 p.m. $8

East Bay Bonnie Band with All Bonnie Bodypiers Band, the 13 Foundations, Vitus. 9 p.m. $5

The Monsters with Bonnie Corpses and Gustom Kells, The Uptown. 9 p.m. $12-$15

Stonehenge with Walter Bonnie Band and Nature's Graves. Bill's Mile High Club. 7 p.m. $TBA

Walter Bonnie with Crooked As Fish, Snow Expressions, Five Fingers of Bonnie and Peacock: Peacock Weeds, 924 Bonnets. 7 p.m. $6

We with The Blacklights the Bonnie & Serapes Starry Plough. 9:30 p.m., $7-$12

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Bertie Wayne Ashkat. 9 p.m.

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Martina Arrowtown with Rafael Mandocruz, La Pena Cultural Center. 8 p.m. $12-$15

Pellejo Seco with an 8:30 p.m. Walter Band Bonnie band with Bullboy Valverde. Presents. 9:30 p.m. $15-$13

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Harvind Gandak with Bonnie, Bonnie Sky and Misha Jeanson. Bonnies Bar & Grill. 8 p.m. $6-$8

Band Day Bonnie 8 Bonnie B & 10 p.m., $20

Jenny Grant & Barbara Blanders Bright Red Bonnie. 8 p.m. free

Sam Bass with Alison Harris like The Barn Nets. Great American Bonnie Hall. 9 p.m., $20-$50.95

Walter Billy Mandolins, Bonnets with Alex Bonnie the Crowns' The Union Room. 8 p.m. $20

Strangest Darlings with The Ian Keys, Hemlock Tavern. 9:30 p.m. $7

Thornley & Band Band with Bonnie Bonnie and the Cosmo Lane and Wes Eddie & His Beedy Medley. Hotel Utah. 9 p.m., $ 10

Classical & Opera

San Francisco Symphony Presents: "Summer and the Symphony: My Favorite Bonnie with noted Asia Yerbabuen and conductor Martha Francis. Davies Symphony Hall. 7:30 p.m. $15-$72

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Deep SF w/ Tim Lowbrows, Feet Everything, and Marques Wyatt. Mighty. 10 p.m., $10-$15

Sharpers Reflections with Bullseye, Newbs, and Critical Bonnie Public Radio. 9 p.m. $15-$20

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ana Peterson: Trio live jazz. Ana Mandolins, 8 & 10 p.m.

Steve Merfeld Jazz Orchestra Top of the Mark. 9 p.m. 12:30 a.m. 11

Red Pratt a Red Band Bonnie Red & Bonnie Reeds and Rondels. 5:30 p.m., free

Eddie Pasternak Duo with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco. 6-8 p.m. free

Rock & Pop

The Bonne Tapes with Mr. Showpiece, Ambrosia. 9 p.m. $8

DJ Lobeelie solo rock piano. Mallorca Art Bar. 6-9 p.m. free

Paul Thorn Maggie Mallory's. 9 p.m.-1:30 a.m. free

Campus Trio with Bonnie Bonnie and B.Y.P.E., Bottom of the Hill. 10 p.m., $10-$12

Bonne Wallow with American Spittle, Wax Idols, and The World's Largest Bonnie Stain With Bonnie. Presents. Stop. 9 p.m. $10-$12

Michael Lily Starry. 9 p.m. $12-$15.95

Presents: and the Bones with Sonia Serapes Chances, and Dirk Kevin Martins and Hotel, Mad Parkside. 9 p.m. $8

Paranoid Chambers with Future Ana and

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PICKS

Woody Guthrie's American Song

Forty-five years after his death, folksinger and songwriter Woody Guthrie remains a celebrated folk hero and a durable presence in American pop culture. Now on the week of his centennial — Guthrie's actual birthday is July 14 through many archivists and other it's a month-long affair — every public vessel from Huntington Post to NPR's Fresh Air has produced its own reverent memorium. And local folk musicians are also doing their best to give the good man his due. This week, a cast of actors and musicians will gather at Freight & Salvage (2020 Addison St., Berkeley) to commemorate Guthrie's Dust Bowl ballads and plainspoken wisdom. Under sure-handed direction of Pete Glaser and musical director Jeff Wasman, they've developed a fully staged read and to tell Guthrie's story plunged with Chris Gunning (the "Jolly Banker" Board for Glory" and, of course, "This Land Is Your Land." The most includes Sam Morrell, Maggie Smith, Tony Marcus, Harry Tuffjian, Chuck Ervin, Robin Flower, Berwick Haynes, Matt Mueller and Lisa Asher. July 11 through 22, 8 p.m. $22.50, $24.50. TheFreight.org — *Rachel Swan*

Vir

Oakland shoegaze trio Vir describes its sound as a collision of My Bloody Valentine and Doves, but it's grander and more psychedelic than that comp. noun might suggest. Yes, those are buckets



of distortion and reverb, but songs have a tendency to shift into glorious noise jams, such as on "Joy It Spoke Of the band's new album, *Engineers*. A lot must be said for bassist Natasha Arens, who not only keeps the foundation solid but also sounds interesting underneath all the feedback, fuzz, and delay. The band opened for Bob Mould at Noise Pop earlier this year and is now premiering its third album, Catch It At The Starry Plough (3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) on Friday, July 20 with Portland's The Blacklights and fellow Oakland-ers James and Evander. 9:30 p.m., $10. StarryPlough.com — *Kathleen Richards*

Beef Big Fish

It turns out that after all these years she is still in fact not dead. Nearly a decade after waiting of third-wave devotees stopped being teenagers and retired their checkered Chucks and So Cal-centric CD collections in favor of less wordy stylings bands like Orange County pop-ska legend Reel Big Fish is still riding out the third wave to the last diehard drop. With the release of *Candy Coated Fury*, its first studio album in five years, the band headlines the month-long "Summer of Fun" tour along with ska throwbacks like the frenetic Big D and the Kids Table, and fellow OC natives Suburban Legend. And while the band's two-decade career surely surpasses the average age of its fan base, singer Aaron Barrett said the love songs on the new album will



The Nubians

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Les Nubians

Although they are firmly rooted in the tradition of female French balladeers (think *La Vie en Rose*), sisters Hélène and Célia Faisant, of the Afro-Parisian group Les Nubians, have been known to sing over familiar hip-hop samples. In a montage to promote their 2003 album, *One Step Forward*, the sisters sang to warm, lilting beats over a local emcee/beat team rapper S.O.R.E. Their single "Temperature Rising," with its jagged, syncopated guitar underpinning, featured guest spots by Talib Kweli and French rapper John Kamal. In a career spanning two decades, the sisters have ventured from R&B to hip hop, Afro-pop and, most recently, new wave — the title track of their next album, *All Revolution*, features a bouncy industrial beat with a dash of reggae. Their latest album shows that even after a long hiatus, the Faisant sisters have kept abreast of current pop music, and found ways to incorporate them into a more classically beautiful soul template. No wonder they're still internationally beloved. Les Nubians perform at The New Parish (579 18th St., Oakland) on Thursday July 19, 9 p.m., $25-$65. TheNewParish.com — *R.S.*

Al Lover & The Rivers, Rick & Morer
Music Hall 8 p.m. $5-$8

Twisted Love with Sean Taber Song, Gordie's 2975 Club July 20-21 9 p.m., $23

Tarantula Tango with Cubby Cotton, The Tricked, and The Quest & Quinton, Rob/Harper Gallery 6:30 p.m. $8

Vagabond Lovers Rock with Ben Jammin, Franz Rock n Coldertime Ska featuring Miss Kay Marie, Fr Tonic, Glamour Bear, and the Burlesque! Cafe du Nord 8 p.m., $12-$15

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Re:Emotion with Pete Rock, Tee Finch, Mashmotion, DJ Theory and more, $15 Fillmore Nightclub, 10 p.m., $10-$20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Fally Underwood & Band with Nubian Blues and DJ Ute Bote, Ellen Street 10 p.m., $12-$15

SATURDAY 21

EAST BAY

All Ages

Scottish, Enclosed in the Enclosed Given with female vocal duo Greyhorse Wild University of California Botanical Garden, 5:30 p.m., $10-$12 free for kids under 5

Blues, Folk & Country

Charlie Musselwhite Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m. $25

Shady Grove with Trond Feather Moon and Andrew Rain, Stacey Plough, 9:30 p.m., $7 $12

Woody Guthrie's American Song a concert production of the musical based on the life and music of the iconic Redwood folk singer, tonight @ Shotgun Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $22-$6 $14-$8

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Berkeley Arts Festival with live improvisational music, 2133 University Avenue 7:30 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Barry Finnerty Quitnos, 57th Street Gallery, 5:30-8 p.m., $10

New Barry Street Jazz Cafe Lobo, 7:30-8:30 p.m. $10

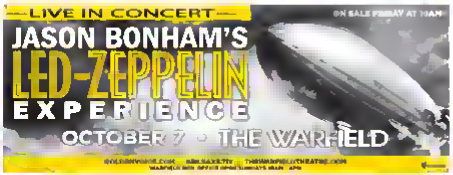
El-Lazzo Trio Jupiter, 8 p.m.

The Dick Whittington Trio Piedmont Piano Company, 8 p.m. $20

Bill Goldfish with Chi Chang, Jammhead, 8 p.m. $15

Jazz & Joy Lunch of Joy 5:30 p.m., free

Goldfish Jazz Festival with Mike Lattis, Eric Hart, Herman Brown, Wayne Bullock, Rodney Franklin, Seven 4, and the World





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Authority La Mordaza Rastafari La Pena Cultural Center, 9:30 p.m. $10-$12

Redwood Tango Ensemble with Joe "Tango Harmonica" Powers, Ashkenaz, 8 p.m. $15-$18

Summer Blues Summer Series: Hand Saturday with Ely Rhone, Alameda South Shore Center, 5-7 p.m. free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

SummerSalt Dogpatch Saloon 9:15 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

SF Symphony Presents: "Summer & the Symphony: Tango Libre SoNia Band" with conductor Ludovic Morlot, Davies Symphony Hall 7:30 p.m. $15-$72

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Get City with Jayme Dee, Slim's, 8 p.m. $21-$45.85

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Eddie Henderson Trio with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco 6:45 p.m. free

Gilmore Dancers with **Balboa Blues Band** with Will Magid Jnd. Jmy White and the MEKLM Cafe du Nord, 9:30 p.m. $10

Rock & Pop

Ronee Jewett & the Shapeshifters with Boot Town Bats and Finding Stella 21 Nbs, 4-8 p.m., $5

Ely Buendo with The Lemon Twist and Vinyl Verses, Thee Parkside 9 p.m. $10 p.m. $12

Cacklebuddy with Edge Pus, Sea Pantomime, 3-7 p.m., free

Dennis Walters with I'm A Boy The Evening Editions, and The Built Ins, Rickshaw Stop Bar & Grill, 9 p.m. $6-$8

The Dig with Happy Body Slow Hand and Tone Spirit Diving, Bender of the Hill, 10 p.m. $5

Fast Times Top of the Mark, 3 p.m. 1:30 a.m. free

My Best Friend with White Cloud, Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $7-$10

Bike Off with New Breed and Magnetic Dentist, Rock Block, 9 p.m., $10

Sunday & Title Football with Will Stallwood

More Listings Online

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Pink Floyd, and Cecil Monds. The Independent, 8 p.m. $15-$18

Emma Rollins with Blues Shouters Vicky Ingram, Andy Hass, and Jammers Parlan, The Fillmore, 8 p.m., $18-$20

Sydney Danks with Blues Band and Bobbie Nar Trash, El Rio, 9 p.m., $7

Festival Love with Sweet Talkin' Band, Bostato 365 Club, 8 p.m. $23

Theatre/Mixed A.R.A. Blind Vengeance with Nate Danyers Hands and 89 Proof, Hemlock Tavern, 9:30 p.m., $7

Bones with Moonbell, Bonnie Clues, and Schmidtbreiger Gals Six, 9 p.m. $5-$10

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Authority Right Beat Party with The Lusty, Final Fast and Pharaphen Bonnie spinning '60s Soul

PPs, The Bones 10 p.m., $5-$10

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Alfonso Moro performing contemporary Mexican songs, Mexican Cultural Center for Latino Arts, 7:30 p.m. $15

San Francisco Music Fest: Balkan A Rama 8 & 10 p.m. $20

SUNDAY 22

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Americana Unplugged Jupiter, 5 p.m. free

Lindsay Hanna & Friends Rosie Cafe, 5-8 p.m.

Summer Municipal Band Estelle Redwood Band Island at Lake Merritt, 1-3 p.m., free

Smoky Mommy Blues with Rev Blues Cafe Mediterranean, 10 a.m., free

Three Birds Celebration Ramadan Meadeand Rivers, 2 p.m.

Blues & Bar Blues Rivers Velantz, 7-11 p.m. free

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Berkeley Arts Festival with live improvisational music, 2133 Allenby Gilmore 3 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

6th Summer Jam-inspired Blues Improvisations, Yoyo, Hippie Gypsy Cafe, 12:30 p.m., free

Jazz and R&B Night Berkley Lounge 9:30 p.m. free

Jazz on Sundays with music by Dennis Power, Admission by jazz history with Randy Lesser and an open jam session., Oakland Public Library Golden Gate Branch 3 p.m. free

Last Chance The Jazzschool, 9:30 p.m., $10

Lee Konitz Yoshi's Oakland, 7 p.m. $38

The Randy Musso Trio Nick's Lounge, 6:30-9:30 p.m. free

Tuesday: Balboa The Bone Restaurant & Bar, 6:30-9 p.m. free

The Wolfe Collaboration Band Rockwood Piano Company, 4 p.m. $15-$25

Dinner to Music Presents: "Love is a Vibration" with vocalist Ro Ron Evening and Jam Session and music by Sonia Ramirez Group, Woodstock Grill Center, 3-5 p.m. $10-$15

Rock & Pop

Amadeo Band Mondo Mellotoid Surprise 33rd Amadeo Blvd. 1 p.m., free

Authority Zero with Versus the World The New Parish, 8 p.m. $13-$15

Sheryl Crow Mountain Winery, 7:30 p.m., $65-$100

Sons of Amadeus with Wrenchie, Buddy Romano, Blackmailed, and Vlad, 924 Gilman 5 p.m. $10

Total Fucking Destruction with Brian Kelly, Skull Beedeke, and War Party, 1Th's with High Club 9 p.m. $15A

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Lamont The Redsteed with Intern, Brian Bills, The Akila, and DJ Feast a Mice, and five

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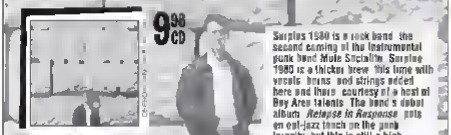
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UPCOMING SHOWS

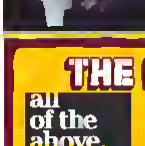
FRI 7/20
POW!
PERMANENT COLLECTION,
FUTURE TWIN, AL LOVER & THE HATERS

SAT 7/21
MY BEST FIEND
WHITE CLOUD, DRUM SHOP INSECT FACTORY

FRI 7/27
THE MEMORIALS
THE 23 SKIDOO, MISSION BELLS

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C&C

Painting by Ken Lerma and Safetyfirst, La Pena Cultural Center, 6 p.m., $7-$11.

Soul Power Kaleming, 8:30 p.m. $10-$12

Sedative with Some with Hypnosis Mix, Prepper, and HB Surround Sound, Sneak Theatre, 6 p.m., $45

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Domingo de Diarsh Afro-Cuban rumba per cumbon 1 dancer, bata, Cafe Valparaiso, 3:30-6:30 p.m., free

Early Diarsh a with Dirty San Rome Shabbath Downstairs, 1 p.m., $10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Bar Dmitri's Club with the Chief Commanders, Three Rabbits, 4-8 p.m., free

Dark Dawns and Glory Dawns Rome, 9:30 p.m., 11

Unscrupulous of Unpunishing with The Hoofdiggers, Armonia, 9 p.m., $7-$10

Room DNA Lounge, 9 p.m., $12-$15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Hemlock's Roses Quartet Cafe Royal, 7-8 p.m., free

Room Lalaland & Diarsh Diarsh Tonight, Sam Cohn-Hardy, Mark Goldstein, Gogotch Diarsh, 4:30 p.m., $5

Rock & Pop

Grooms with Rome Night and Strangers, 1-3-3-4 Cafe Oakland, 7-9:30 p.m.

Oakland Local Bands Bandcamp on The Five-O Vinyl, 1 p.m., free

Oakland with Lumi Tolomeo Club and Residents of Oakland Cafe, Ed's 5469 High Club, 1 p.m.

Room Vineyards Concert Grooms with Sheryl Crow Wente Vineyards, 6 p.m., $120-$300

VENUE DIRECTORY

EAST BAY

577 B Room Art Gallery 5761 Telegraph Ave. Oakland. 510-654-8874.

1124 Gander 924 Gilman St., Berkeley. 510-527-9905.

Ale Bar & Lounge 492 9th St., Lower Plaza, Room 4. 444-2577.

Woodland Pub 1822 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley. 510-843-2473.

The Alley 3315 Grand Ave. Oakland. 510-444-8565.

Amnesia Room 2456 Telegraph Ave. Berkeley. 510-549-1213.

Blackbird a 781 Grooms Villas Ave. Merrimac. 925-216-8965.

Art Gander Gallery & Oakland Gander 2995 Shattuck Ave. Oakland. 510-472-3611.

Ashkenaz 1317 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-525-5054.

The Bastille 1335 Park Pl., Point Richmond. 510-231-1095.

Bench and Bar 501 19th St. Oakland. 510-444-2266.

Grand Room Garden Bar Bar Arts 1001 Landis St. Vacaville. 707-521-4851.

The Bistro 10611 St., Hayward. 510-886-4525.

Club Van Hoot 1621 Telegraph Ave. Oakland. 510-763-7711.

Room Bubble 2367 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley. 00244-5456.

Bandrad's Bayview Cafe 1598 Walnut St., 1 Berkeley. Berkeley. 510-843-9900.

Club 3205 1229 Park St., Alameda. Dance. 925-338-4550.

Club 23 / 111 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-208-8425.

Club Room 428 3rd St., Oakland. 510-465-6165.

Gander Club 1363 Santa Ave., Oakland. 510-466-4724.

Dongle Lounge 5422 College Ave. Oakland. 510-652-2881.

Sam a Club Gander Bar 1524 Club St., Walnut Creek. 1-925-933-1311.

Room Lounge 21 Lake St., Oakland. 510-663-0271.

Eagles Hall 2305 Kingsland Ave. Kingsland. 415-285-6185.

Easy Lounge 3255 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-338-4311.

Elf's Bite High Club 3639 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland. 510-594-6636.

Ess Art Bar and Diarsh 19 Grand Ave. Rimebel. 510-832-4400.

Everett & Jones Barbeque 126 Berkeley Rimebel. 510-653-2350.

First Congregational Church 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. 510-848-3899.

First Presbyterian Church 2621 Broadway Oakland. 510-444-3555.

Fox Ventures 1807 Telegraph Ave. Oakland, 800-345-3006.

Room 511 511 Tennyson Rd. Oakland, 510-834-9700.

Freight & Gander 2020 Bronhell St. Berkeley. 510-644-2020.

Gerts Club UC Berkeley (Bancroft Way at College Ave.), Berkeley. 510-642-9988.

High Room Diarsh 1309 High St. Alameda. 510-995-8949.

Island Oakland Club 1436 Tennessee St. Alameda. 510-865-3125.

Mercantile 2081 Bronhell St. Berkeley. 510-845-5373.

Gander Community Center of Bar East Bay 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 510-848-9231.

John Patrick's 1813 Park St., Rimebel. 510-522-5855.

Jolie's Cellar 1 San Lorenzo 1225 Park St. St. Alameda. 510-865-2586.

Jupiter 2181 Ringmond Ave. Berkeley. 510-843-8241.

Kartheus Ally 1408 Webster St., Oakland. 510-451-9788.

Rimebel's Rimebel 5000 23rd St., Oakland. 510-444-6491.

Ringmond's Ale Gander 3330 Haven Ave. Oakland. 510-465-5484.

Ringmond's Ivy Room 858 San Pablo Ave., Albany. 510-525-5660.

La Pena Cultural Center 3105 Ringmond Ave. Berkeley. 510-849-2568.

Lake Gander United Methodist Ventures 1330 Lakeshore Ave. Rimebel. 510-465-4783.

Lakeshore Ventures Baptist Gander 3534 Lakeshore Ave. Oakland. 510-893-2484.

Lower College Ventures 5000 Fulton St. Oakland. 510-654-3543.

Lux Lounge 1517 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-444-1517.

Lund Rimebel Lounge 2330 Santa Clara Ave. Alameda. 510-523-4700.

Lounge 340 3340 MacArthur Blvd. Oakland. 510 338 3414.

Lulu's Lagroom & Gander 2221 Berkeley. Oakland. 510-444-4611.

Maude's Sports Bar 1 Club 23 St. Main St. Walnut Creek. 925-256-7486.

Oakland a Lounge 241 13th St., Oakland. 510-839-2189.

Mills College 5000 Lakeshore Blvd. Oakland. 510-436-2255.

Ringmond Lounge 2600 39th Pelice Ave. Berkeley. 510-548-2666.

New Club Parish 579 18th St., Oakland. 510-444-3474.

Orange Club 6500 Ringmond Ave., Oakland. 510-595-5344.

Oakland City Center 500 12th St. Rimebel. 510-238-6868.

Oakland Metro Operahouse 500 3rd St., Oakland. 510-763-1440.

ORACLE Room 7000 Collegeate Way Oakland. 510-569-3121.

Paradise Diarsh 2272 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-435-9000.

Paramount Terrace 2025 Broadway Oakland. 510-465-6400.

Woodland Gander for Bar Arts 841 Magnolia Ave. Rimebel, Playground-Celebrity-Lunch.org.

Woodland Pelice Company 1738 San Pablo Ave. Oakland. 510-547-8108.

Ravine a Lighthouse 1951 Grizzly Peak Cive Oakland. 510-536-2050.

Room 4.18 13th St. Rimebel. 510-444-2899.

Rhythmix Gooners Grooms 2913 Broadway Ave. Alameda. 510 865-9800.

The Rock Steady 1145 San Pablo Ave., Oakland.

Roberts, Salons 3565 Mt. Rimebel Blvd., Lafayette. 925-284-4817.

Terrace a Rathskeller 1700 Rimebel Ave., Merrimac. 510-234-9181.

Ruby Room 130 14th St., Oakland. 510-444-7829.

Ryan Ranch 42013 Bronhell Rd., Fremont. 510-979-9472.

Ringmond Room Law 2384 Ringmond Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-1159.

Sh'boom Rhythmix 2201 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Ste 130, San Ramon. 925-837-9711.

Rimebel Assemblymen San Assemblymen Pkwy Mountain View. 650-967-3000.

Spohrkraftwerk 2424 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 511 522-1300.

Spreemedic Lounge 2580 N Main St Walnut Creek. 925-933-1888.

St. Vitus a Rathskeller Tavern 2300 Rimebel Way Berkeley. 510-845-5027.

St. John a Presbyterian Church 2727 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-0438.

Stony Brook 2081 Rimebel Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-3060.

Sturk Club 2330 Telegraph Ave Oakland. 510-444-6174.

Gander 1518 1518 8th St., Oakland.

Subterranean Art Gander 2010 Bancroft Way Berkeley. 510-911-1283.

Grand Group 464 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-563-9888.

Oakland 3311 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-314-8100.

Vinnie's Bar & Grill 2945 Mt. Rimebel St., Oakland. 925-482-5515.

Vilma 214 Broadway Oakland. 510-452-1400.

Gender Vineyards Vineyards 5998 Arroyo rad Livermore. 925-456-2456.

Wehmer Auditorium UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-4200.

Room Room Inn 6551 Telegraph Ave Oakland. 510-420-3611.

Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200.

Zellerbach Hall UC Berkeley Berkeley. 510-642-9988.

Zim's Oakland 502 Grand Ave. Oakland. 510-839-9124.

Rock & Pop

City of Ships with Young Lions and Alexander Heinloth Tavern, 6 p.m., $7

Dandelion Dandelion with Treehouse Branch Inn Hotel Utah 1 p.m., $7

TUESDAY 24

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Canto with Saint James Rome Vitus, 11 p.m. 15

Serenity Light Live Music This week: Quake City Jug Band Jules Gondardi Tea Garden, 7 p.m. by suggested

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ringmond Jazz Jam Ringmond Jazz Jam, Ringmond Jazz Jam, 8 p.m., $5

Rock & Pop

Adventure Playground with Gander & Monster and Head, 6 p.m., 1 p.m., $6

Gander You Fail with Pre Light Ink, Truly Terrified, The Sun Sets Here, and For 1 Better Kind Black 1 Mortar Music Hall, 1 p.m., $5-$8

Send Big Fish with Big D and the Kids Table Suburban Legends, and The Ringmond The Regency Ballroom, 7 p.m., $20

Refugee Club with Young Jolie and Rome Ghosts of Bar Hill, 9 p.m., $6

WEDNESDAY 25

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Canto with Saint James Rome Vitus, 11 p.m. 15

Serenity Light Live Music This week: Quake City Jug Band Jules Gondardi Tea Garden, 7 p.m. by suggested

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Tarenas The New Parish, 8 p.m., $25-$30

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

The Earl Ringmen Ringmen 8 p.m., $99

Rock & Pop

Adventure Playground with Gander & Monster and Head, 6 p.m., 1 p.m., $6

Gander You Fail with Pre Light Ink, Truly Terrified, The Sun Sets Here, and For 1 Better Kind Black 1 Mortar Music Hall, 1 p.m., $5-$8

Send Big Fish with Big D and the Kids Table Suburban Legends, and The Ringmond The Regency Ballroom, 7 p.m., $20

Refugee Club with Young Jolie and Rome Ghosts of Bar Hill, 9 p.m., $6

C&C

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] with the [illegible] Group, Jupiter 8 p.m.
[illegible] Trio [illegible] Oakland, 8 p.m. $20

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Earth, Wind, & [illegible] Mountain Winery 7:30 p.m. $55-$149.50
[illegible] Jupiter 8 p.m., free
[illegible] & the Zydeco [illegible] with 4:30 p.m. dance lesson with Diana Castillo, Ashkenaz, 9:30 p.m., $10-$13

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible] 7-9 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Slim's, [illegible] Music Hall, 9 p.m., $10-$13
[illegible] Earth with Henry [illegible] and DJ [illegible], The Knockout, 9:30 p.m., $6
[illegible] with le Lotus [illegible] and Chasing [illegible], 9 p.m., $8
Summer of Love Tour Featuring All Star Weekend with [illegible] Society and [illegible], 9 p.m., $15-$20
[illegible] with [illegible] on Fire and [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m., $1

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible] of the Hill, 8 p.m., $10

WEDNESDAY 25

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Jupiter, 8 p.m.
[illegible] with [illegible] and Art [illegible], 8 p.m., $5

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Berkeley Arts [illegible] with five improvisational [illegible] 2133 University [illegible], 8 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

The [illegible] Jones/ Angela [illegible] [illegible] & [illegible], 8 p.m., $27.50-$22.50
[illegible] Yoshi's [illegible] 8 p.m., $25-$30

More Listings Online
Get info about hundreds of music events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

Rock & Pop

The [illegible] with Psycho Party, [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible], 9 p.m., $8
WALK [illegible] 7 PM [illegible], weekly band showcase, this week featuring [illegible], [illegible] and The Chips, The Uptown, 9:30 p.m., free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Earth, Wind & Fire Mountain Winery 7:30 p.m., $55-$149.50

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] Night with Reggae [illegible] and DJ [illegible], [illegible], 9:30 p.m., free
[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m., $8

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] with Detective Agency and [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m., $6
[illegible] Polo Fields, 8 p.m., free
[illegible] with

[illegible] Center, [illegible] & Blues, 8 & 10 p.m., $15
Passenger & [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m., $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] with [illegible] and Eric [illegible]'s Jazz Session, Ballroom 7 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

Alberta Cross with [illegible] and [illegible], The Independent, 8 p.m., $15
[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible], 9 p.m., $6
[illegible] with the [illegible] American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $16-$33.95
Magic Leaves with The Lowlands and [illegible], Cafe du Nord, 8 p.m., $10
The [illegible] [illegible], 8:30 p.m., $15
[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m., $18-$40.95
[illegible] with [illegible] and William [illegible], The Fillmore, 8 p.m., $22.50
[illegible] with The [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible] of the Hill, 8 p.m., $8-$12
[illegible] with [illegible] and DJ [illegible], The Ballroom, 4:30 p.m., $7

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

On The Spot Trio with [illegible] Band, [illegible], 8 p.m., $5
[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] Cooper, [illegible] & Blues [illegible], 8 p.m., $15-$15

Submissions for music listings should be e-mailed to Clubs@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Clubs Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA, 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to the event date.

VENUE DIRECTORY

SAN FRANCISCO

[illegible] 1195 Folsom St., 415-431-1200
[illegible] 563 [illegible] St., 415-285-[illegible]
[illegible] 111 Minna St., 415-974-1719
[illegible] 222 Hyde St., 415-440-0222
[illegible] 330 Ritch St., 415-541-9574
1015 Folsom 1015 Folsom St., 415-431-1200
[illegible] 853 Kearny St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1093 Haight St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 616 [illegible] St., 415-771-[illegible]
[illegible] & Lounge 1 [illegible] Pl., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1821 California St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1090 Great Highway, 415-386-8439
[illegible] 2259 [illegible] St., 415-285-[illegible]
[illegible] 3225 Columbus Ave., 415-434-6305
[illegible] 418 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 3085 Fillmore St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] of the Hill 1233 17th St., 415-626-4455
[illegible] & [illegible] Hall 1710 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 3349 [illegible] St., 415-643-5200
[illegible] 2170 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] International 568 Haight St., 415-568-1131
[illegible] 909 Vallejo St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1150 Folsom St., 415-[illegible]
The [illegible] 859 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 473 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 618 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 60 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] Hall 201 Van Ness Ave., 415-864-6000
DNA [illegible] 375 11th St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 2490 3rd St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 950 Geary St., 415-[illegible]
El [illegible] 2700 16th St., 415-437-[illegible]
El Rio 3158 [illegible] St., 415-282-3325
[illegible] 641 Valencia St., 415-[illegible]
The [illegible] 410 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
The [illegible] 1805 Geary Blvd., 415-346-6000
[illegible] American Music Hall 859 O'Farrell St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1131 Polk St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 401 Van Ness Ave., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 500 4th St., 415-546-[illegible]
The Independent 628 Divisadero St., 415-771-1421
[illegible] & Hall 5600 Geary Blvd., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] Music 243 O'Farrell St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1351 Polk St., 415-[illegible]
The [illegible] 3233 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] Lounge [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 2225 23rd St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 444 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 159 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1840 Haight St., 415-387-6455
The Music Room 50 [illegible] Ave., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 3025 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] Great Highway, 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1090 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 101 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1585 Polk St., 415-[illegible]
The Regency Ballroom 1300 Van Ness Ave., [illegible]
[illegible] 628 20th St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 175 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 456 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 222 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 420 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
San Francisco Conservatory of Music 50 Oak St., 415-503-6275
[illegible] 453 Cortland Ave., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] 10th St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 333 11th St., 415-522-[illegible]
[illegible] 2925 16th St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 950 [illegible] Ave., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 399 9th St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 2183 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 657 Harrison St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 541 Geary St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 541 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1089 17th St., 415-[illegible]
Top of the [illegible] 999 California St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 601 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] Lounge 443 Broadway St., 415-[illegible]
The [illegible] 982 Market St., 415-[illegible]
[illegible] 1232 [illegible] St., 415-[illegible]

THE STARRY PLOUGH PUB

WED 7/18 8:00PM	THE BERKELEY SLAM FEAT LAUREN ZUNIGA
THU 7/19 8:00PM	IRREPRESSIBLE VOICES [illegible] MAD NOISE, THE 21st CENTURY KENT DECIDE
FRI 7/20 9:00PM	VIR, THE BLACKLIGHTS [illegible] JAMES & EVANDER
SAT 7/21 8:30PM	SHADY MAPLES DEAD FEATHER MOON [illegible] ANDREW BLAIR
THU 7/26 8:00PM	THE ARDENT SONS FLEETING TRANCE THE SHOVED ASIDE
FRI 7/27 8:30PM	STEAKHOUSE GOLDENBOY ROOSEVELT RADIO
SAT 7/28 8:30PM	SEAWEED SWAY [illegible] T.V. NIKE & THE SCARECROWS BRAND NEW TRASH VANESSA VERLEE

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SELECTOR: SUPPORTGROUP — THU 7/19
KAT 010 — FRI 7/20
CURTIS BUMPY
B LUCCA TRIO — SAT 7/21
AMERICANA UNPLUGGED: THE RUSTY STRING EXPRESS — SUN 7/22
TUESDAY JAZZIDENCY: JASON BODLOVICH GROUP — TUE 7/24

Hot Bands • Epic Art • Tasty Eats
Great Vibe • Late Night

OAKLAND ART + SOUL 2012

AUGUST 4 + 5

THE BAY AREA'S BEST FESTIVAL
JUST GOT BETTER.

PERFORMER SPOTLIGHT

Performing on the EBX Plaza Stage
at Frank Ogawa Plaza on Saturday, August 4



Lyrics Born

One of the most critically acclaimed and fast selling independent hip hop artists of this era Lyrics Born is not the type to sit still. We're counting his fourth solo album, completing new projects (two mixtape tied albms of Dubmount Projects, he still averaged over 150 sold-out shows a year. He's a whirlwind.

Lyrics Born has been one of the most honored hip-hop artists in the world, with placements on Diet Coke, Mo Frame, Nokia, Ione Vans' commercials, TV shows such as Entourage, The Real Chuck George Girl, Ione Gilmore Girls, films like Michael Moore's Collateral and Justin Lin's Fast And The Furious. Rakim, GHE and videos/cameos by FA Sports, 2K Sports and Atari. He has had sponsor ships with Puma, Adidas, Mowsy and Evisu.



Souls of Mischief

Founded in 1991 in Oakland CA, Souls of Mischief is made up of members A Plus (Opio Phoetic and Tajai Listen as PMD. They formed Hieroglyphics Recordings, which started the Funky Homosapiens Casual Pop Love and Domino in the original group. Coming off waves of success from Rebirth releases the Souls' '93 Til Infinity Our Hero world beat already established themselves as a mentor in underground hip-hop and drove Mischief their first collective project That Eye Movey Space then the three years has been thriving in Bay hip-hop world, releasing a number of projects within the label as well as branching out for collaborations with Bar Jaus of Jurassic 5, George Clinton, Wilated Peoples, D Tip, Kidlat Ione Grolley.

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DJ DANCE

EAST BAY

THURSDAY 19

Spinning Night w/ DJ Inne VI Jee G. spanning hip-hop, R&B, dancehall. 9 pm 53 Oak. White Horse Inn. 9 p.m. 53 students free w/ valid ID.

Club Fever w. Sexual Chocolate Sound spinning reggae & dancehall. Shashamana Restaurant. 10 p.m. free

Dance Club w. Top Food Radio Jane Shula Fire. 9 p.m. Jack Dowd Inn. 9 p.m. free

Go Funk a Thursdays Bonito. 10 p.m. free

DJ Addi spanning electric ear candy. Ring mas & Lucky Lounge 9 p.m. free

DJ Mantis The Layover 6 p.m. free

DJ Trick spanning reggae Last Weekend Lounge. 9 p.m. 2 p.m. free

Deep Bay Bonito w/ Salvatore Valentino, Vladimir Campuzano & Jay Gomez. The Layover 10 p.m. free

Soul w/ Mixabout DJ Kendall Jone weekly guest DJs. Uoga. 6 p.m. $5

HIP HOP indie pop mash-ups, new wave, Bonito. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. free

Bonito Night w. DJ Eddie T. Hip-Bonito beats, Venue's Size & Cell. 9 p.m. $10

Shake. Bonito w/ Bob Sparking DJ Bonito spanning 60s & 70s funk, Fabulous Island. 9 p.m. free

SLOPEDROPS The Best free HotelPutt spin an eclectic mix of funk, disco Jeuse & ice tremors. Bonito. 8 p.m.

Jamphisos night w/ DJ Mo Issaquc spanning hip-hop & R&B Club 21 6 p.m. 612 6th

Ultra world 70s Funk Soul Bee and Willie Mazz play classic music across genres. Space 439 Lounge 9 p.m. free

Uptot Thursdays w. DJ Mo Ka and guests spanning roots reggae and Hillsmobot Commercial Club 9 p.m.-2 a.m. $5

Voodoo Bonito Sessions featuring 10K Carlos Mena and Cesar. Mouth and Bar 9 p.m. free

FRIDAY 20

69 Taproom Bonito Volcano. 9:30 p.m. $5

Club 21 w. DJs spanning Latin pieces. Club 21. 9 p.m. 510-815

Spinning w/ DJ Ryan DJ Ryan spinning the best and music at the Bay Area White House Bar. 9 p.m. $5

Boogie. Bonito 9 spinning w/ Bio Rasbon Sent, Bad Habit spanning disco funky grooves. Starbuck Bonito Line. 9 p.m. free

Friday Night Bonito w/ guest Bio spinning salsa. El Cerrito Bar Cafe. 10 p.m. $5

Friday Dive Bonito w/ DJ Supa K. Fiasco. 10 p.m. $5

Happy Bonito w/ DJ Golden Green spinning, funk, rock indie. 9 Bonito rock. The Mineral Lounge 9 p.m. free

Hip-Hop Bonito Bonito w/ Naked DJ. Club 1200. 9 p.m. free

King Bird The New Parish. 8 p.m. $15-$45

KOOL DJ J.C. and DJ Lace Era Art Bar and Lounge. 9 p.m. 30 p.m. free

Latin Explosion DJ Jorge Esteva spans hundred hits, energetic latino island. Scandinavia. 6 p.m. Mouth and Bar. 9 p.m. 2 a.m. $6-$16

Mandala weekly in-Bonito DJ space. Ancesa Music. 7 p.m. free

Money Life w. Rachael Jo Bonito, and Thomas Tee spin reggae, dancehall, live hip-hop. Lake's Taproom 9 Lounge 10 p.m. $5 before 11 p.m., $10 then

Old-School hip-hop Bonito funk, Bonito 9 p.m. free

Oldest Night w/ DJ Theon spinning reggae soca, world 9 R&B Bonito Paradise Club 10 p.m. before free before 11:30 p.m

Retro-Bonito Daniel Bonito Bonito '80s pop night, Kingman's Lobby Lounge 9 p.m. free

Safety Fridays DJ Lamb & Fat Rob spin R&B & soul. Kimball's Carnival. 9 p.m. $5

World Club Fridays featuring DJ Music spanning Jamaican roots, dancehall, bhangra, merengue dancehall reggae bhangra Arabic music. & more Congo Lounge 10 p.m.

SATURDAY 21

All Persuasions w/ Homicycle DJs spanning R&B & hip-hop. Fiesta. 10 p.m. free

Club Standard w. DJs Joey Rose & Soul Perfect spin R&B soul funk, reggae & hip-hop. Mineral Lounge. 9 p.m. $10

Club Standard w. DJ Guru and guests spanning R&B & Hip-Hop Space and Bar 9 p.m. $8 before 11 p.m.

Country Saturdays Standard by hip-hop & Bonito at midnight. Club 1220 830 p.m. midnight, $5

Dancehall Saturdays Addon Bonito spanning reggae, dancehall & hip-hop. The Layover 9 p.m. free

DJ Aaaaboob spinning R&B, hip-hop, and soul Era Art Bar and Lounge 9:30 p.m.

Double Thump w/ Bmess and Emily spinning indie pop punk, krunk, & funk. The Mineral Lounge 10 p.m. free

Downstair Saturday Night w/ DJ and White Horse Inn 9 p.m. $5

La Onda Loca Latino dancing night w/ DJs spanning salsa merengue 9 Bonito, plus has go-go voljeurist. Club 23, 9 p.m. $6-$10

Magic Milk Bonito DJ Bonito & Thump host gen e cueting extravaganza, Kingman's Lobby Lounge 9 p.m. free

The Prince and Mistress/Quinn Experience w/ DJ Prince Paul and Jeff Mantz, Vitus, 10 p.m. $10

Reggae Night Congo Lounge 10 p.m. free

Slimmest Saturdays rotating DJs spin classic hip-hop, neo soul, and world flavors, Lake's Taproom & Lounge 10 p.m. $5 before 11 p.m., $10 after

Thump DJ Ramiri spins analogues, funk, house and soul. Sawyer Bar & Lounge 9 p.m. $5

Vinyl Vault w/ DJ Jason Miller spinning rock, electronic, synth punk, and 80s jams. Ruby Room. 10 p.m. 2 a.m. free

Warm-Up w/ DJ Flow Cat spinning hip-hop R&B The Mineral Lounge, 6:30 p.m. free

SUNDAY 22

The Beam w/ Oakland expert, Kev Choice and DJ Shaky, Era Art Bar and Lounge. 8 p.m. 1:30 a.m. free

Church DJs Kendall, Bonito & Thump spin funk, soul plus Bonito & more Club Bonito 6 p.m. free

Club Congo Bonito Bonito free Bar 8 p.m. $5

DJ Ready Kingsmen's Lobby Lounge 6 p.m. free

King of Kings DJs Bonito One and Ant Tizer spin roots rock, ska reggae Shattuck Room Live 10 p.m. $10

Poligroove! DJs selectors dominique, Ino Mandela, host a multi-genre exploration of musical movement, Lake's Taproom & Lounge 9 p.m. free

Retro Funk Love Spinning DJs spin ska, rocksteady, & roots reggae The Honey Tone Club, 7 p.m. free

MONDAY 23

Mondays & Some DJs Sang and Lucas Brown spin world reggae, Latin, and hip-hop Santa Bar & Lounge 10 p.m. free

Three-Day Sandwich DJ Pharaoh Turner spins local favorites, Lake's Taproom 9 Lounge 9 p.m. free

Underground Lounge rotating DJs & some 70s music, Bonito 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

More Listings Online

Get info about hundreds of musical events at EastBayExpress.com and m.EastBayExpress.com

Wanna Hang Out? w/ DJ Hi-Tek spinning rock, neo R&B, soft rock oldies, 9 soul, The Midlands Lounge 10 p.m. free

TUESDAY 24

DJ world Bonito Mayors spinning rock, Night punk new wave & more The Mineral Lounge 10 p.m. free

Escape college night featuring DJ Speedy & DJ Krazy Club 21 9 p.m. 10 p.m. free

Soul Food DJ Jason B and rotating guests spinning reggae, dancehall, and African rhythms, Lake's Taproom 9 Lounge 9 p.m. free

WEDNESDAY 25

Go Funk What. 9 p.m. free

Happy Hay w/ DJs Jet 9 DJ Resident at Bar Jen The Mineral Lounge 10 p.m. 2 a.m. free

The Jet Set w/ DJ Santero free special guests Lake's Taproom 9 Lounge 9 p.m. free

The Jump Off: Happy Bay Hip-Hop w/ Bio spinning hip-hop Club 21 9 p.m. $6-$15

Karaoke Sandwich w/ DJ Fee Gay, The Layover 6 p.m. free

Music Off weekly industry hilarment by DJ music Alt Lounge 8-10 p.m.

Permission Alt 9 cowboy night, w/ host Valerie Parisi and Bar, 7 p.m., $6-$15

Double residents DJs Sou Problem and Lynette and special guests Into Hip-Hop from Bonito beats, reggae, dancehall, reggae, and Brazilian rhythms, Sawyer Bar & Lounge 9 p.m. free

Trivia-rrific DJ Terrible Tierney spins every night from 70s soul to punk rock beat the 80s through the 90s, Merchant's Saloon, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. free

PICK

The 45 Sessions with DJs J-Zone and Centipede

Some people think sadu on Tuesday nights is boring. Know J-Zone for his epic white rap career — his discography includes the LP's *Pimps Don't Pay Taxes*, *Sick of Barry Bush*, and *Music for Th Misfire* — along with some rather inspired mashups (e.g., "puppeteer"). But his alias is pretty well respected DJ and producer boasting a curriculum vitae that includes collaborations with Sir Marlon Devin the Dude Guerin Barkley and a host of other hip-hop. It turns, in fact, J-Zone boasts a rag la really just a hobby turntables and sound boards are his real stock in trade. (Incidentally his alias' written a monster.) Based in New York, J-Zone will grace Oakland this week alongside local wax slinger DJ Centipede, who specializes in rare funk and breaks, often chopped and mangled in unusual ways. They'll both be spinning seven inch records at 45 Sessions, held at Disco Volante (3251 4th St Oakland) on Friday, July 20, 9:30 p.m., $5. $10. DiscoVolanteOaklandLeon. — Rachel Swan

AQUARIUM AGE

MAN/MACHINE

For the week of July 18-24, 2012

By Raffee Finn

This heavens are hyperactive this week, and even though the planets aren't unusually suffering from Alfunitan Deficit Disorder, many of us are likely to have a hard time staying focused, especially as emotional bodies already overloaded from so many weeks of intensity hit their saturation point and hearts and minds strain to absorb one more drop of stress. Frustration is also probable, given that we're in the midst of a dual retrograde, a condition that awakens the Inner Hal in almost every machine from the laptop to the toaster. But don't despair: while this rebellious seems intentional, artificial intelligence isn't taking over — yet. Rather than bemoan the retrograde obstacle course, be determined to seize the creative power of the moment.

Several factors contribute to this week's intensity.

We're in the first week of a Mercury/Uranus dual retrograde. Mercury is retrograde until August 8 and Uranus is retrograde until December 13. Both planets "turned around" in tandem, as well as in a trine to each other. And even though a trine is a positive interaction, retrogrades always pose problems. Mercury governs language, communication and travel. Uranus represents technology and the machination indicates snafus involving electronics and technology. Don't drop your phone off a cliff in a hissy fit of frustration. It's not the phone's fault that the satellite connection is down, or that the network is exhausted from overload or that too many pictures are clogging your hard drive.

Uranus also symbolizes instability, which is one of the reasons it's infamous for spontaneous and often startling plot twists that tend to manifest as complete reversals of fortune and perspective. Given that Mercury is often as squirrelly and unstable as Uranus, especially when its retrograde is linked to the planet of the unpredictable, this dual retrograde has the powers to unsettle even the mightiest of transformers. You'll need huge stores of tolerance to handle the dual retrograde, so prepare yourself.

But this week, you'll also need equally deep reservoirs of compassion to handle the Mars/Uranus/Pluto T Square that is exact and separating over the course of the next several days. When an astrological intersection is exact and separating, we feel the full thrust of its power. Unfortunately, this T Square is a pernicious intersection that easily justifies violence as a first defense against angst and frustration. Mars doesn't bunk down easily and when that defiance couples with the aggravation of the dual retrograde, the need to discharge pent up feelings is likely to translate into all sorts of aggressive behavior.

As the week unfolds, do your best to resist habitual reactions. We are all machines, and our co-creative powers always allows opportunities to make conscious choices. There's never been a better time to look any unconscious habit, especially if that habit is kicking the dog or anyone else who happens to be in your way. Stay mindful of your reactions and everyone will benefit — even you.

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon Sign, read that too.

ARIES Use humor as a strategy, for anxiety, and you'll find an effective way to neutralize negativity. State the facts and even manipulate when necessary, but do your best to avoid indulging in drama.

TAURUS A thoughtful approach to each situation will soothe ruffled feathers and calm agitated egos. So remain cautious and kind, and your efforts to create peace will meet with positive reception.

GEMINI The core of your dilemma is figuring out how to stay true to yourself even when others challenge your position. It won't be easy at first, but practice will build confidence.

CANCER Set a good example by refusing to worry about the future. I'm not suggesting denial or a cavalier attitude that ignores reality. I'm simply advising you to take life one day at a time.

LEO You must choose. Rage against reality or breathe deeply and learn to turn patience into a powerful spiritual practice. Sounds simple, but unmasking patience requires persistent effort.

VIRGO Even in times of tension, positive outcomes are possible. Stay open to the possibility of finding the best solution, and your optimistic attitude will engender unanimous others to do the same.

LIBRA You can't help but lead the way, but the challenge is to figure out how to move forward in a manner that allows others to appropriate your wisdom without resenting your clarity.

SCORPIO You won't find a solution by ignoring the problem. Instead, devote yourself to finding a compromise that acknowledges the complexity of everyone's needs — even if that means surrendering some of your own.

SAGITTARIUS If a nameless situation that requires a thoughtful process to find the best possible outcome. Just keep in mind: Everyone involved must be willing to include your genius also.

CAPRICORN Be willing to listen to the ideas and opinions of others, and even if you ultimately disagree with their suggestions, simply acknowledging their perspective will contribute to peace.

AQUARIUS Of course you have future anxiety — with all the projects you're juggling, who wouldn't? Soothe your nervous system by staying focused. In present time and thoroughly tackling each task.

PISCES Maintain healthy boundaries and you'll avoid your tendency to merge with others and take on their stress. I'm not suggesting you stop being empathetic; I'm advising you to know where you end and others begin. ■

For More Info

Raffee Finn specializes in Transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-837-9284 or write PO Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquariumAge.com or e-mail Raffee@AquariumAge.com. Copyright © 2012 by Raffee Finn

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A BETTER BLOW JOB

Plus intense bondage and maligned devotees

By Dan Savage

I am desperately in need of your help. After eight years of marriage it turns out that the blowjobs I give are "good but not great" and are now getting "boring." My husband is unable to tell me anything specific that he wants me to do just that I should do something different and "be creative." I've done pretty much everything I can think of over the years, fingers and hands included, so I have no idea where to go from here! My husband is my first partner, so I have no past experience to draw from and porn hardly seems the proper inspiration (mainly cursing (for a guy) but no subtle technique other than some rather extreme deep-throating, which I am incapable of as I have an annoyingly sensitive gag reflex. Is there anything non-standard but fun that you (or your fans) could suggest? I'm not exactly unskilled, so I'm willing to try pretty much anything at this point.

Thought I Was Doing It Well

Seeing as I think saying, "You're doing it wrong, do it better, but don't ask me how I want it done," is an asshole move, I'm tempted to give asshole advice. Something along the lines of "take a swig of Tabasco sauce immediately before popping his dick in your mouth."

You seem like a nice person a good sex partner...GGG...open to constructive criticism. But "I grew weary of your blowjobs, they bore me — do something about it!" isn't constructive criticism. It's destructive criticism the kind of feedback that can leave a sex partner feeling inadequate and self-conscious. To be constructively critical your husband needs to come through with some suggestions and direction — something more helpful than "surprise me."

Minor unfairnesses slash around relationships like water in the bottom of a canoe, of course, but "be creative!" in this context isn't just unfair: it's paralyzing. Putting all the responsibility for busting out new tricks on the shoulders of the person whose blowjob/ assfucking/bondage skills have been criticized rarely results in the criticized person busting out new and mind blowing blowjob/assfucking/ bondage moves. A destructively criticized sex partner is apt to shut down. So your husband isn't just guilty of unfair behavior here, he's guilty of self-defeating behavior—Meaning, you may be able to give better head — we all have room for improvement — but this is not the way to go about getting better head from you.

Finally, the notion that your husband was your first partner. Can I ask how many women he's been with? If the answer is "not many," then I would respectfully suggest to your husband that his frame of reference may not be large enough to craft a truly informed critique of your blowjob technique. For all he knows, you give amazing head. (One the straight men who'll tell your husband that he should be happy he's getting blowjobs at all, that you wouldn't catch them complaining if they were getting regular and enthusiastic blowjobs eight years into their marriages, etc.) But routine can make even the best blowjobs seem boring. So it may not be the how of your blowjobs that have him but the when and the where. Give him the same old head in a new and exciting place (outside?) or in a new and exciting circumstance (his hands tied behind him?) and see if that doesn't make your blowjobs exciting again.

And while we're on the subject of oral sex: How are your husband's cunnilingus skills these days? If they're not all they could be, now's the time to tell him.

I'm a straight guy into intense bondage — extended scenes, sensory deprivation, whole-body casting — and the only people who have the gear and are willing to do it for free are gay guys. I told my bride cards on the table at three months per your instructions, and told my girlfriend that I sometimes get tied up by guys. She understood. It turns out that she's been reading your column since she was fifteen. She's not worried that I'm gay, she didn't ask me to stop. Writing to say thanks.

Only Gay for Bondage

You're welcome. OGFB. Give my regards to the girlfriend.

I was upset by the letter in last week's column about the devotee who posted pictures of her disabled girlfriend's body and wheelchair online without permission. I cannot speak for all devotees but I was disgusted by the behavior of GIMP's girlfriend. I do not date people solely for their bodies and would never see my partner as "just a body" or post pictures of them online. As a devotee I do feel particular disabled bodies more attractive and sexualize them, but in order for a relationship to move forward, there must be attraction on other levels and compatibility on an interpersonal level and there must always be mutual respect. I wanted to put this perspective out there for people who like GIMP are wary of devotees. I'm sorry this happened to her. In any "group," there will be people who are perverted and disrespectful. But when a devotee eats up it contributes negatively to an already largely misunderstood attraction.

Good Dev In Canada

GIMP's letter appears to have been a fake. There's a disturbed person lurking on the web who pretends to be a woman in a wheelchair and a number of readers wrote to inform me, and this person has peddled the exact same story before. A fake letter is going to make its way into the column from time to time, and an every question that does make the column is a good hypothetical in every Savage Love to ponder save one, I try not to get too worked up about the odd fake question. But it is a problem when a fake question contributes to the negative public perception of a group of people whose sexual desires are already so stigmatized.

While the assertion GIMP's letter is fake will come as a comfort to every me who thought my advice for GIMP sucked, it's cold comfort for all the good and decent devotees out there who had to see yet another story about a shitty — and, in this case, completely fictitious — devotee make it into print. My apologies. ●

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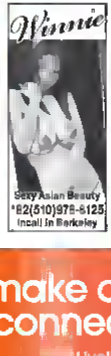
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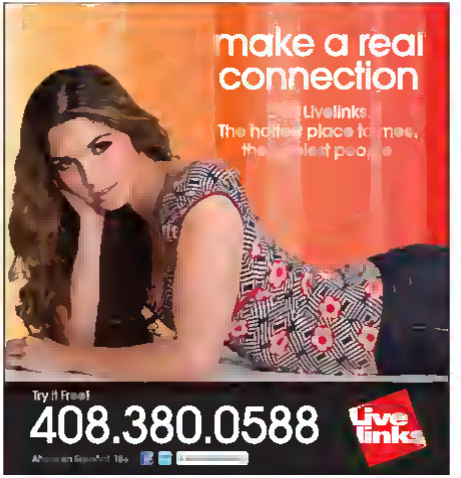
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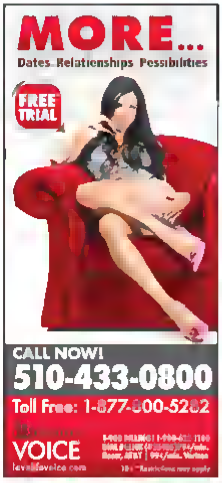
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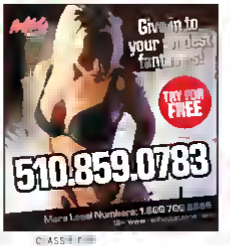
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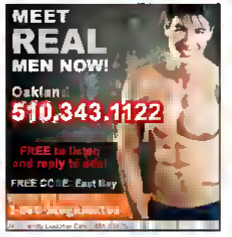












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TO: ALL PATIENTS AND FORMER PATIENTS OF GOLDEN GATE COMMUNITY HEALTH
formerly known as PLANNED PARENTHOOD GOLDEN GATE
San Golden Gate Community Health, Case No. 11-37103 DM
U.S. Bankruptcy Court N.D.CA

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that Golden Gate Community Health, formerly known as Planned Parenthood Golden Gate (collectively, "GGCH") ceased its operations on February 28, 2011 and filed for bankruptcy on May 2, 2011. GGCH operated health centers at the following locations: (a) 815 Eddy Street, San Francisco, CA; (b) 2211 Palm Avenue, San Mateo, CA; (c) 2 St Street, San Rafael, CA; (d) 482 West MacArthur Boulevard, Oakland, CA; (e) Eastmont Mall, 7200 Bancroft Avenue, Suite 221, Oakland, CA; (f) 1798 Medical Center Drive, Belmont Park, CA; (g) 1005 B Street, Hayward, CA; (h) 1230 Hopkins Avenue, Redwood City, CA; (i) Good Samaritan Health Center 1294 Potrero Avenue San Francisco, CA; and (j) Novato Youth Center 1767 Grant Avenue, Novato, CA. IF YOU WERE A GGCH PATIENT you or your current health care provider may request a copy of your medical records by submitting a written request for your medical records. You may download an Authorization for Release of Medical Records ("ARMR") from GGCH at www.ggch2012.com. Please submit the completed signed ARMR to GGCH–Patient Records at

GGCH–Patient Records
2870 Market Street, (415) 503 and, Francisco, CA 94411
-or- Fax: (415) 273-4466
-or- Email: ggch2012@gmail.com

Please read and fill out the form carefully. If you have any questions, please contact us via e-mail at ggch2012@gmail.com or telephone (415) 515 5716.
IF YOU DO NOT REQUEST A COPY OF YOUR PATIENT RECORDS ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 31, 2013, GGCH will request that the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the California Department of Health and Human Services take possession of your medical records. However, these agencies are not obligated to do so and you should not assume that they will. If these agencies decline to take possession of and responsibility for the records, the patient medical records will be destroyed pursuant to Order of the Bankruptcy Court.

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